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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Dream gardens

Design ideas for early summer

Rediscovering the historic **Foster irises**

How to grow **verbena**

'Encombe is a world within a world'

Tom Stuart-Smith's restoration of a Georgian estate

James Basson's

Beautiful, sustainable design in the South of France

9 OF THE BEST

outdoor ovens

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"There were lots of things we wanted to do to the house but this was the one thing that we felt everybody benefited from. Having the pond has made a big difference to the way we use the garden. We all love it. The water is amazing, it's like swimming in silk."

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Editor's letter

James Basson is best known to British gardeners for his award-winning designs at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, most recently a Maltese quarry garden with brutalist limestone blocks planted with evergreens, perennials and grasses. In this issue we share his latest work, a beautiful, sustainable, private garden in the South of France. Rich in biodiversity, the project is on-going and James notes the role of the artist-gardener in this process; observing, responding to the landscape and making decisions about how and what to replant. "There are probably too many new gardens being designed," James suggests. The emphasis here is on continuity.

Lucy Skellorn is the great-great granddaughter of scientist, politician and gardener Michael Foster. Foster was the first Chair of Physiology at Cambridge University and a man who counted Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley among his friends. Based on his own observations, record keeping and careful selection, Foster was a prodigious breeder of modern irises, and introduced many hybrids at the turn of the last century. Free from flounce and frill yet heavy in colour and scent, his introductions continue to be at the heart of iris breeding today, and Lucy has established a new National Collection.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

CLAIRE TAKACS

James Basson's sustainable design for a private garden on the French Riviera, page 88.

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JASON INGRAM

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- Get free UK p&p when you order the new *A Year in the Edible Garden* special edition – page 121
- Save on the ultimate allium collection from Hayloft Plants† – page 123
- Receive a free set of safety feet with every purchase of a Henchman ladder† – page 124

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Marina Christopher
Plantswoman Marina introduces us to the many types of verbenas, page 56. "*Verbena* is a hugely versatile genus, much loved by pollinating insects and with a long season of interest."

John Hoyland
John meets Lucy Skellorn, keeper of Foster irises, page 64. *"I enjoyed visiting Lucy not just because the irises are so beautiful but because she was so infectiously enthusiastic about them."*

Andrea Jones
Andrea photographs Tom Stuart-Smith's garden at Encombe page 46. *"The beauty of this elegant estate was overwhelming – Tom's addition of these graceful gardens was quite seamless."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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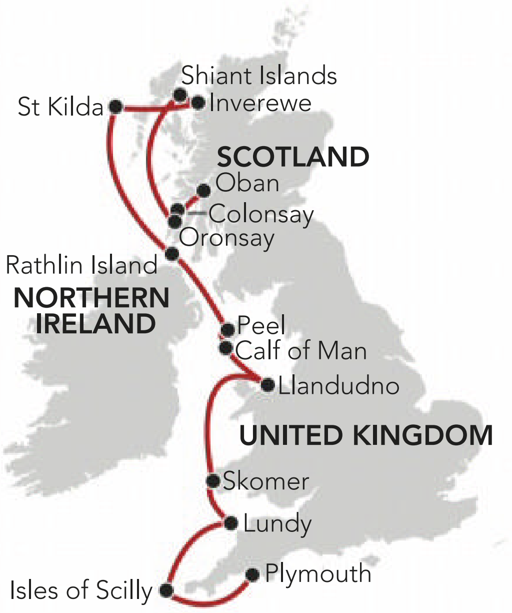
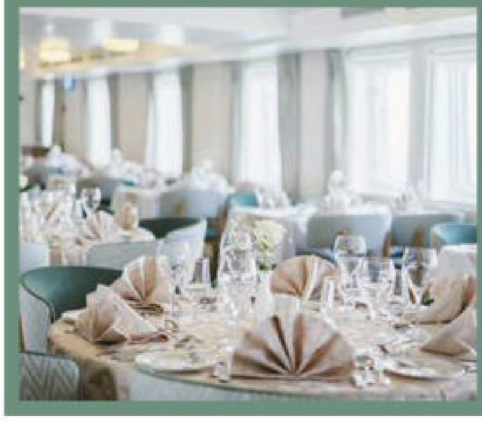


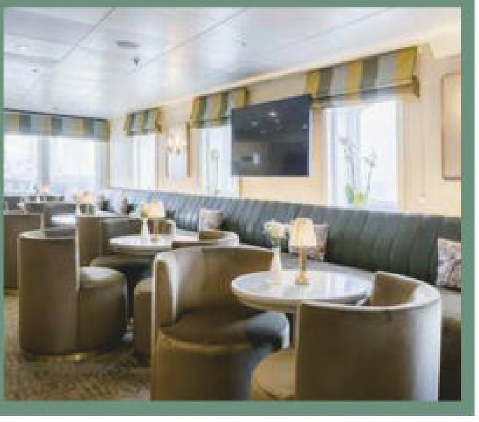
During the month of May our western shores become alive with colour. This is a spectacularly beautiful time when many of the gardens are at their most appealing and the countryside will be lush and inviting. This, combined with the sheer diversity of the coastline, makes for a most appealing sea journey, whether you be an avid gardener, birdwatcher or simply enjoy sailing past and visiting some of the most enchanting places in the world. Each day there will be the opportunity to explore coastal paths, see the resident wildlife and enjoy the wonderful views on offer accompanied by our expert onboard team.

Our voyage provides a unique opportunity to explore the splendours of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland and amongst the many splendid gardens we will visit are the subtropical Abbey Gardens on the charming island of Tresco, Bodnant Garden in the beautiful Conway Valley and Inverewe Gardens, Scotland's botanical gardens in the north-west Highlands. With regards to birds, we have included visits to Lundy and peaceful Skomer Island which, carpeted with beautiful bluebells, is home to many birds including puffins, guillemots and razorbills. We will also call into Rathlin Island off the north coast of Ireland, home to hundreds of seals and nesting seabirds.

MS Serenissima

The charming MS Serenissima accommodates a maximum of just 95 guests in attractively designed cabins which feature air conditioning, modern shower and toilet, telephone, flat screen television and other thoughtful appointments. Cabins are arranged over five decks and all feature either windows or portholes and the suites feature balconies. Onboard facilities include a lido area with a bar and Jacuzzi, two lounges, a small library and a spacious observation deck. The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting. In addition, there is an outside dining area for when the weather and itinerary permit. The atmosphere on board is warm and welcoming, and the emphasis is on well thought out itineraries, relaxation, time spent with like-minded passengers and discovery.





The Itinerary in Brief

Day 1 Plymouth, England. Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon in Plymouth. Transfers will be provided from Plymouth Railway Station at a fixed time. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner and sail this evening.

Day 2 Isles of Scilly. Spend the morning on traffic-free Tresco, walking its idyllic lanes from the beach to the famous subtropical Abbey Gardens. Defying the Atlantic weather, this miracle of a garden is home to more than 20,000 species of plants from over 80 countries. Enjoy time to wander at your own pace along the paths. We spend the afternoon on delightful St Agnes, the most southwesterly community in the UK which offers marvellous

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coastal walks. Alternatively, join a boat trip to the nearby island of Annet, the second largest of the uninhabited islands and a bird sanctuary. We will cruise the coastline alive with puffins, European storm petrels and shag.

Day 3 Lundy & Skomer Island. We have scheduled a morning on Lundy, a remote and absolutely delightful island in the Bristol Channel. Walk along its traffic-free lanes and paths, explore the wide bays and coves by way of hanging valleys, observe the puffins nesting in abandoned rabbit warrens, have a drink at the inn and buy the 'puffin stamps' at the island's shop. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail to Skomer Island, one of the most important wildlife sites in Northern Europe. It is a marvellously peaceful and scenic island with fantastic birdlife. Weather permitting we will use our Zodiacs to explore the coastline.

Day 4 Llandudno, Wales. This morning will be spent at Bodnant Garden. Situated above the River Conwy, the gardens have stunning views across Snowdonia. Begun in 1875, Bodnant Garden is the creation of four generations of Aberconways and features huge Italianate terraces and formal lawns on its upper level, with a wooded valley, stream and wild garden below. This afternoon will be free to explore Llandudno at leisure. Developed as an upmarket holiday town for Victorian visitors, this seaside town still retains much of its 19th century grandeur.

Day 5 Calf of Man & Peel, Isle of Man. At first light we will cruise around the Calf of Man, a 600 acre island situated off the southern tip of the Isle of Man, and home to thousands of seabirds. Afterwards we will continue to Peel where we will have some free time to explore. This afternoon we will visit Tynwald Hill, located in the little village of St John's. This grass-topped, tiered hill is made from the soil and stones from each of the island's 17 parishes and is the point from which, each 5th of July, all the laws enacted in the year preceding are promulgated to the gathered government officials and the public at large, both in Manx and English languages. At Castletown, board the vintage steam train for a delightful journey to Douglas. Dating from 1874, the Isle of Man Steam Railway is the island's oldest Victorian rail system and this narrow gauge railway still runs with its original locomotives and carriages.

Day 6 Rathlin Island, Northern Ireland. Arrive this morning at Rathlin Island. Located just a few miles from the North Antrim coast, Rathlin has been settled for more than 6000 years. Today, there are only 140 or so souls, whereas before the Great Famine there were 1200 inhabitants. History can be seen everywhere here amongst the historic buildings and ruins. Enjoy a guided walk which will also take in the prolific seabird life with astonishing numbers of puffins, kittiwakes, fulmars as well as grey and harbour seals. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and an afternoon at sea as we sail to the Scottish islands.

Day 7 St Kilda, Scotland. Awake this morning in St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of the few UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us on board before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks on the island. Later, cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Berneray.

Day 8 Inverewe & Shiant Islands. This morning we will visit one of Scotland's premier gardens, Inverewe. This botanical garden in the north-west Highlands, presents an amazing collection of exotic trees and shrubs that are sheltered by well positioned windbreaks of native pine. After a guided tour of the gardens, we will return to the ship and sail over lunch. This afternoon we will board the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of Lewis and an excellent place to spot puffins, razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully white-tailed eagles.

Day 9 Colonsay & Oronsay. Lying between Mull and Islay, we will spend the morning exploring the lovely island of Colonsay with her craggy, heather-backed hills and sparse woodland yet with an impressive array of plant and birdlife. Near Colonsay House, built in 1722 by Malcolm MacNeil and bought by Lord Strathcona in 1904, we will visit the attractively dilapidated wooded gardens. Oronsay is separated from Colonsay by a wide expanse of shell sand -The Strand- that can be crossed by foot when the tide is out. The island is owned by Frances Colburn and managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds who run a trim, environmentally friendly farm.

Day 10 Oban. Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow Airport and Glasgow Central Station at a fixed time.

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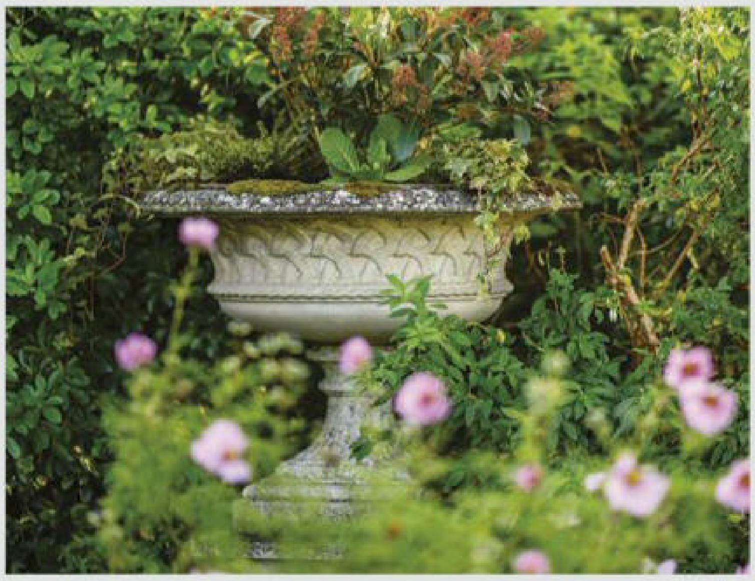

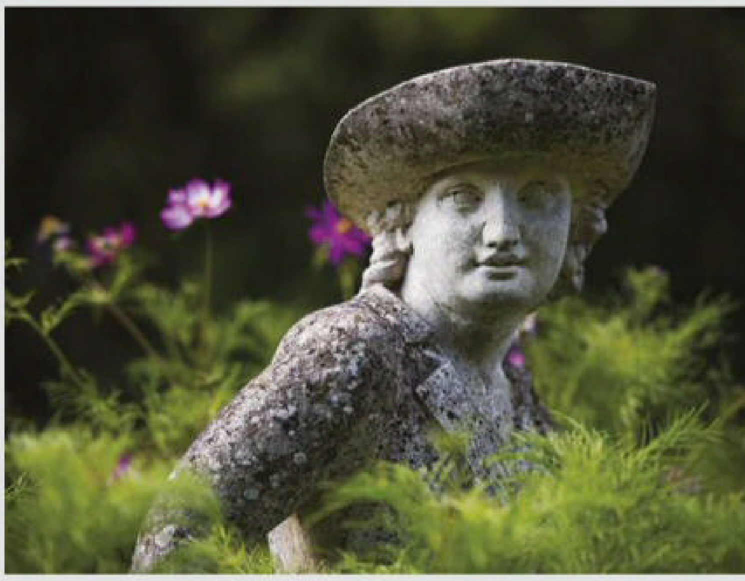

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TOUR HOST

Sarah Wain
Sarah, along with her husband Jim Buckland, is the inspirational force behind the restoration of the Kitchen Garden at West Dean, Sussex, where they perfected the growing of both fruit and vegetable crops.

JASON INGRAM

With the call to grow your own becoming ever louder, our tour offers help, inspiration and expertise on how to grow the finest kitchen garden produce throughout the year. We visit a contrasting selection of the very best examples of kitchen gardens in the South West: we are taken from the plot to the plate at both **The Pig at Combe** and at Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's organic smallholding at **River Cottage**; at **South Wood Farm** we see Arne Maynard's design for a productive potager and we glimpse true estate gardening at **Edmondsham House**, while also visiting the unusual 18th-century 'serpentine' wall of the kitchen garden at **Deans Court**. As well as organic gardening, we also consider the no-dig approach, as espoused by **Charles Dowding** at his own impressively productive garden and come bang up to date with a visit to recently opened boutique hotel **The Newt** with its decorative kitchen garden. The tour is based at the Georgian **Summer Lodge Hotel** in the Dorset village of Evershot and surrounded by rolling hills, with a small kitchen garden of its own and where guests will be warmly welcomed.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £2,595 (a single supplement of £300 is levied by the hotel).

The price includes: three nights' bed & breakfast accommodation at Summer Lodge; three dinners with wine; plus three lunches, and transport from Bristol Parkway Railway Station or Summer Lodge. The price does not include extras or travel insurance. Please note that hotels used by Boxwood Tours are invariably hotels of character featuring a variety of rooms and styles.

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Dig in

What's happening, what's in flower and what to buy this month

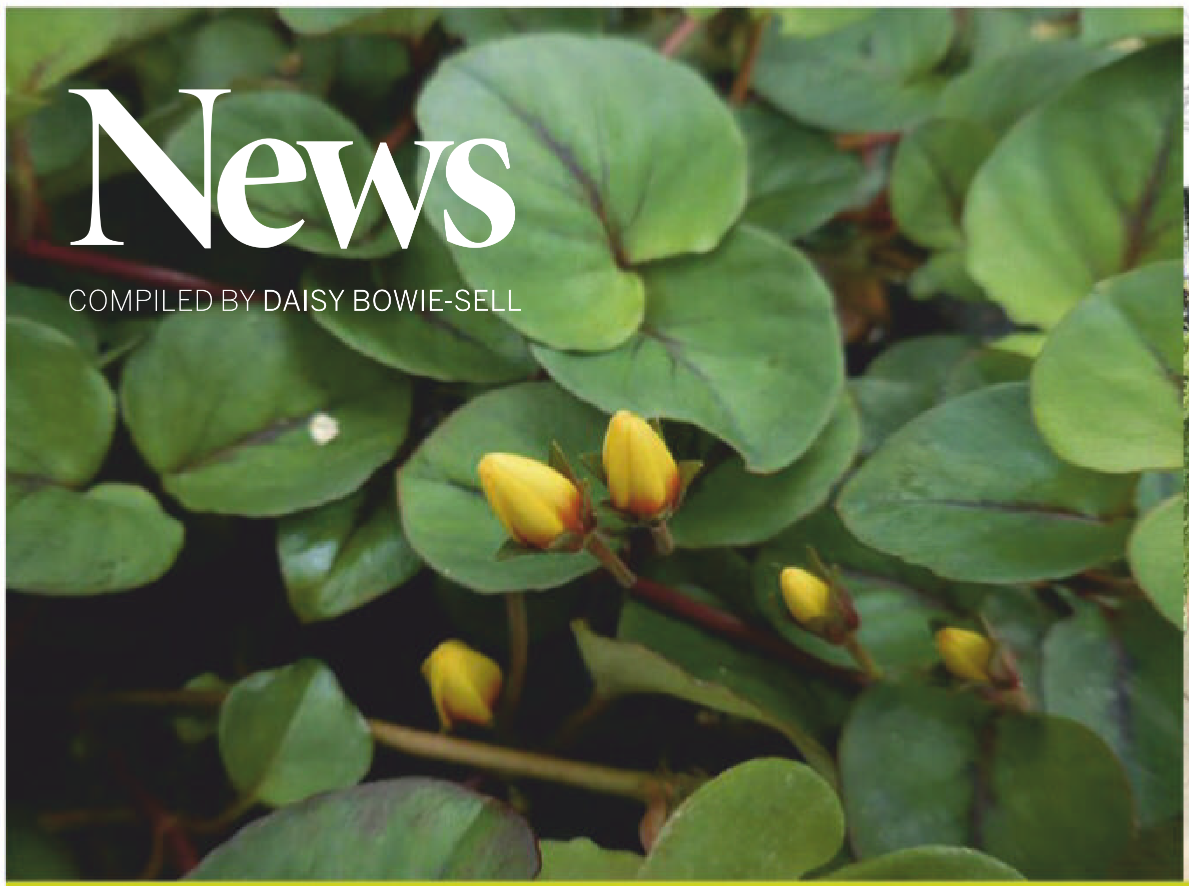
RUSSELL BROWN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

New public forest in Northumberland

A significant step has been made towards increasing the number of trees in Britain after Forestry England revealed it has bought 100 hectares of land in Northumberland with the intention of turning it into new woodland. Part of the government's initiative to create the Great Northumberland Forest, this is the second of three forest sites planned by Forestry England's North District, which will cover a total of 500 hectares. Planting trees is a vital way of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, helping to tackle climate change. Forestry England is hoping to plant around 250,000 new trees, including spruce, pines and mixed broad leaved trees, and will also ensure that open space will be provided. Work has already begun on planting the first of the three forests at Rushy Knowe, managed on the shore of Kielder Water. This second forest is in Monkridge, West Woodburn (pictured right), and it is the first significant area of land Forestry England has bought to plant trees in more than 20 years. The planting and planning intention includes maintaining and enhancing the site's existing historical features and areas of habitat. It is hoped that work on the new forest will begin in autumn. **forestryengland.uk**

News

COMPILED BY **DAISY BOWIE-SELL**

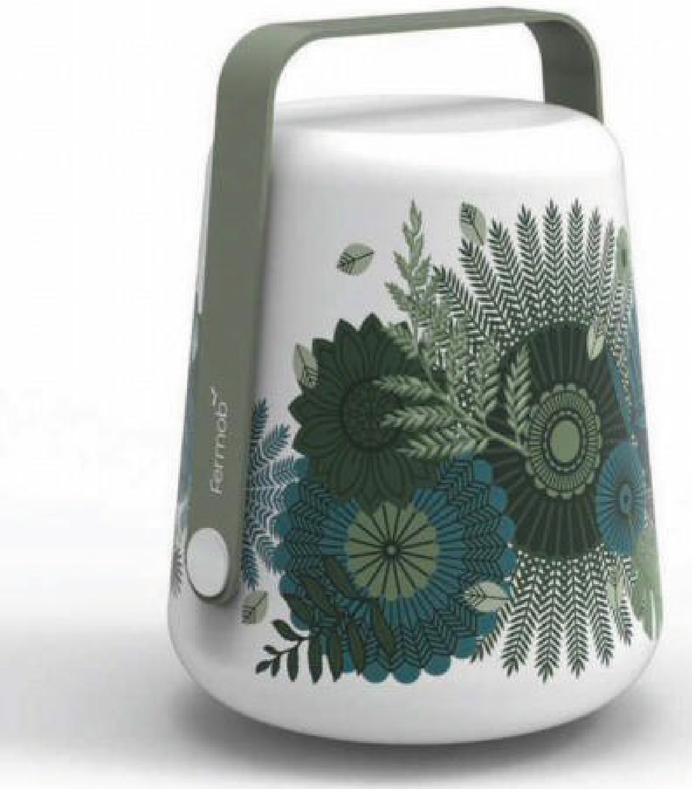


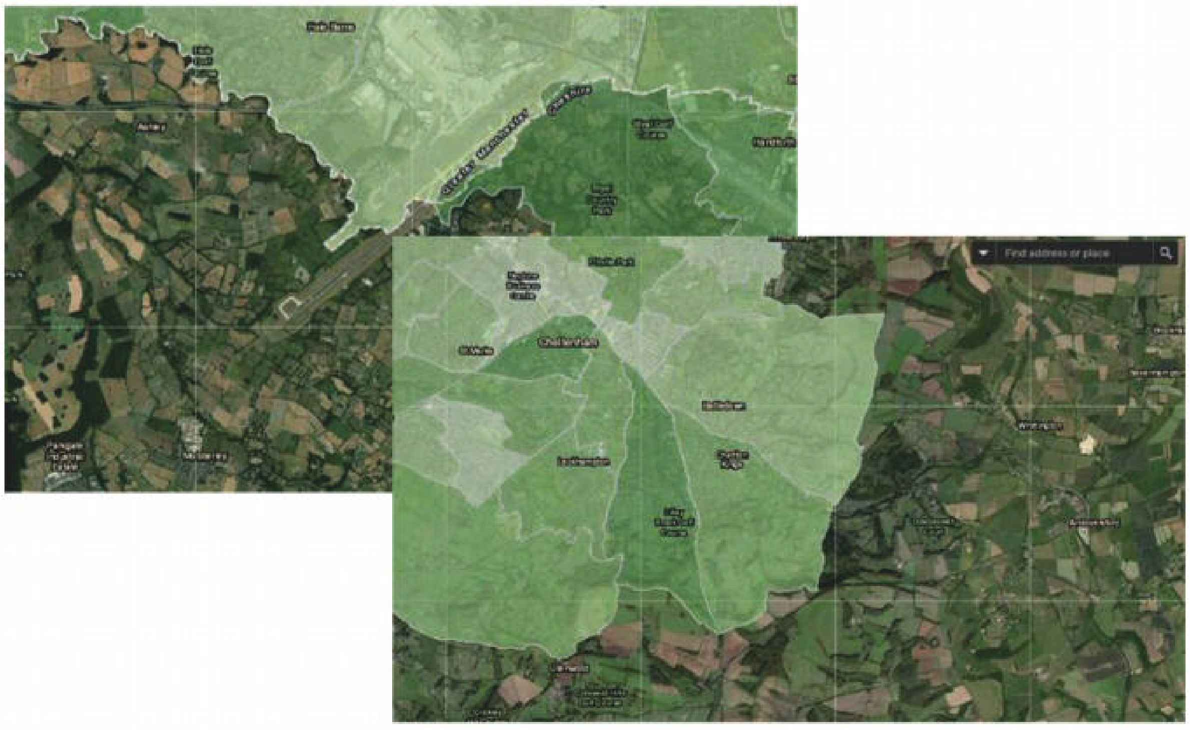
Burst of sunshine from a master plantsman

Hillier Nurseries has unveiled five new plants for 2020, including a particularly interesting specimen from a plant originally grown by plantsman Roy Lancaster. *Lysimachia christinae* 'Sunburst' has been developed by Hillier and is a trailing perennial that can grow to more than 1.5m. Its dark-green foliage is a lovely contrast to the mass of golden-yellow flowers it produces in early summer for four to six weeks. For more information, head to **hillier.co.uk**

Light fantastique

Outdoor furniture design company Fermob has teamed up with contemporary French artist Koralie, to turn its sleek, white outdoor Balad lamp design into kaleidoscopes of colour. Koralie's Balad Vegetal limited edition design, features a pattern of rosettes and palm gardens and will make a charming addition to any garden. Available now for as long as stocks last, priced €89.
fermob.com/en





Map your tree canopy

A new citizen science project aims to document an urban canopy cover map for Britain. Urban trees are beginning to get the status they deserve both for helping to tackle air pollution and providing a habitat for wildlife, as well as making cities more attractive. An interactive tool called i-Tree canopy allows people to submit recordings from their local wards and upload them, thereby filling in the canopy. The work will help management of urban trees and identify built-up areas that could benefit from tree planting. To take part visit ***forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco/urbancanopycover***

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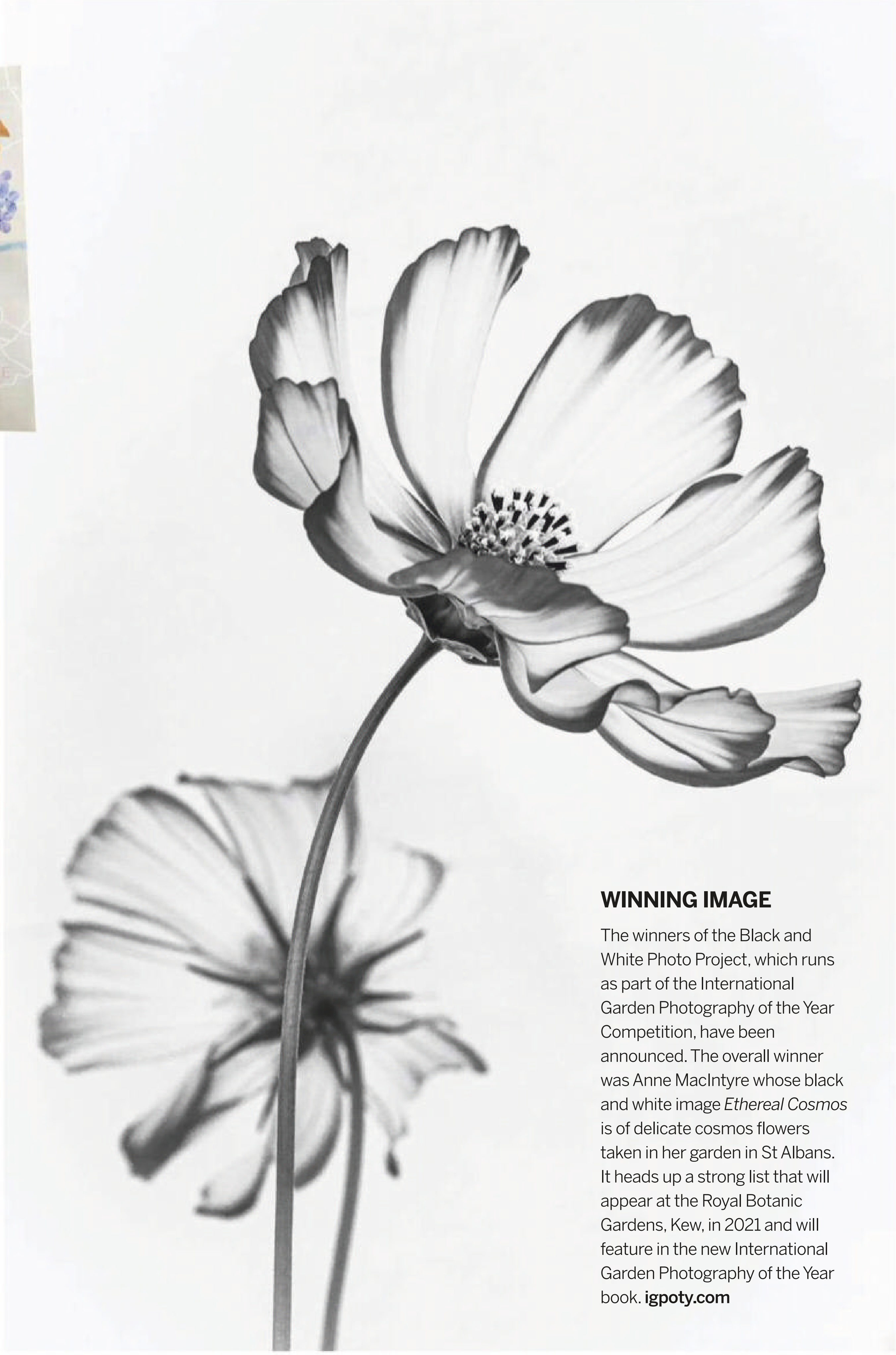
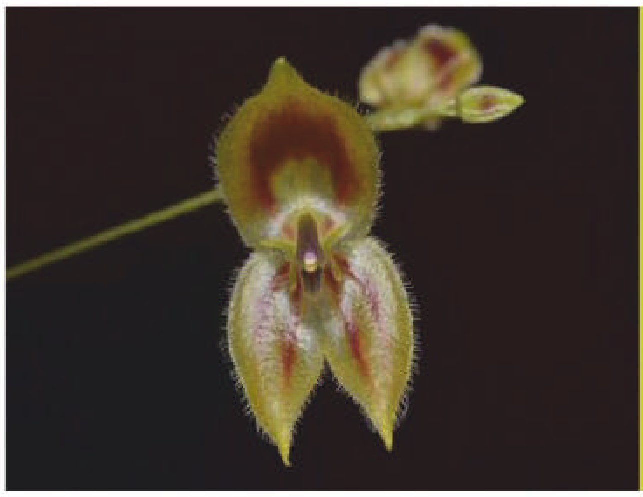
Floral London

London's brightest and possibly sweetest smelling spots are highlighted in this new flower-focused illustrated map that will guide you on a trail of over 80 floral destinations throughout the capital. From physic gardens to trend-setting florists, the brightly coloured illustration points you in the direction of blossoming rose gardens and more. It's a new way to re-discover the city for anyone who loves flowers. ***finchpublishing.co.uk***



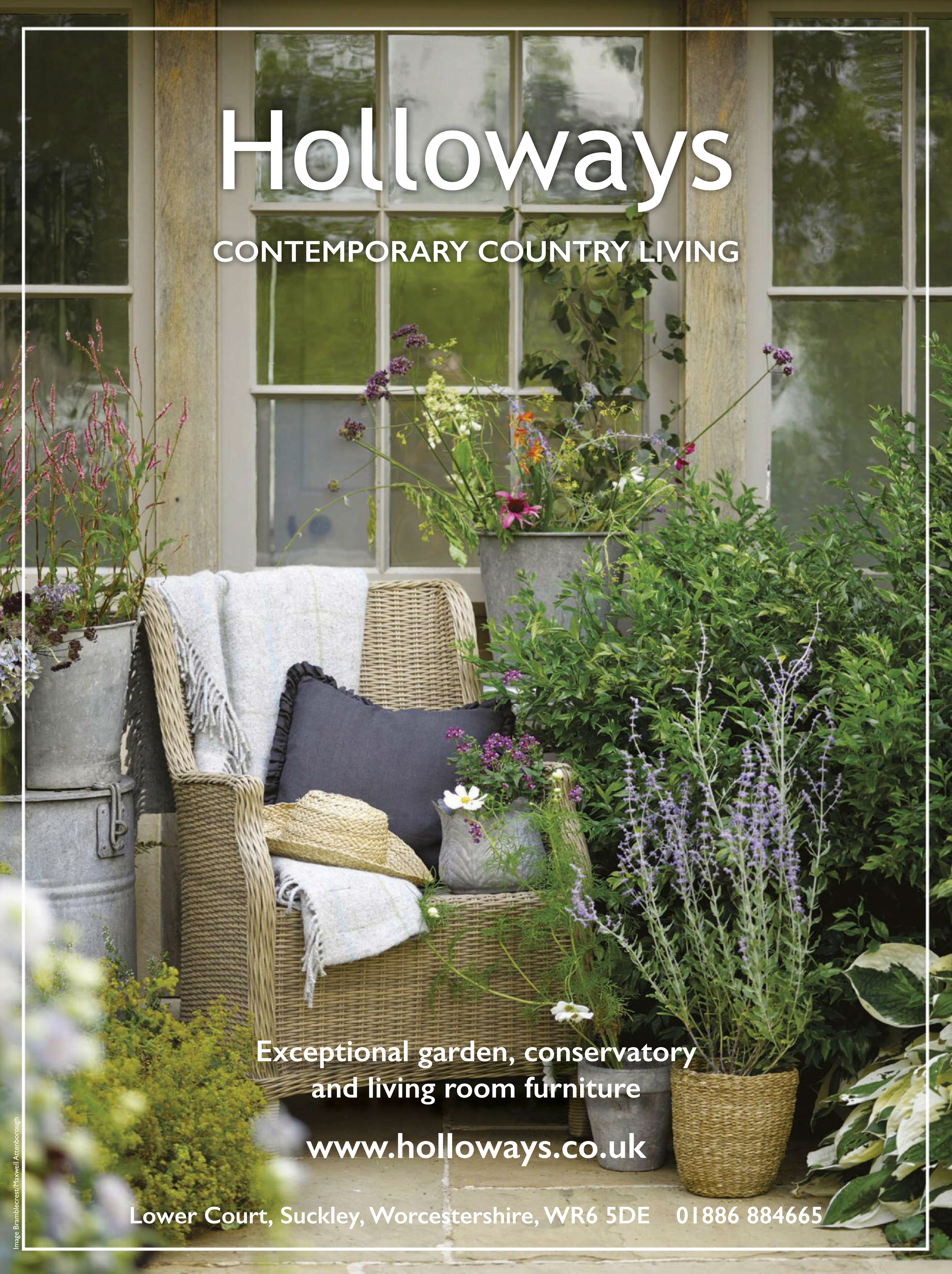
WINNING IMAGE

The winners of the Black and White Photo Project, which runs as part of the International Garden Photography of the Year Competition, have been announced. The overall winner was Anne MacIntyre whose black and white image *Ethereal Cosmos* is of delicate cosmos flowers taken in her garden in St Albans. It heads up a strong list that will appear at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in 2021 and will feature in the new International Garden Photography of the Year book. **igpoty.com**



NEW ORCHID SPECIES

A new species of orchid, *Lepanthes mashpica*, has been discovered in Ecuador's Mashpi Reserve. Collected on one of the many trails that surround Mashpi Lodge, the species belongs to the Pleurothallidinae subtribe of the orchid family and it joins a growing number of flora and fauna that are endemic to this diverse but threatened tropical forest, including *Magnolia mashpi* and a treefrog called *Hyloscirtus mashpi* or Mashpi Torrenteer frog.



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A very unusual Buddleja with a mixture of bicoloured purple and white flowers and a few flowers on each raceme wholly white and a few wholly purple. Very floriferous with 15 – 20cm long flowers.absolutely shines in the garden. As a late flowering *Buddleja* it can't be beaten.

To see more about this unusual plant visit the website for the National Collection of *Buddleja* at **www.buddlejacollection.com** and Peter's own website at **www.bredbypetermoore.co.uk** the home of exceptional garden plants.

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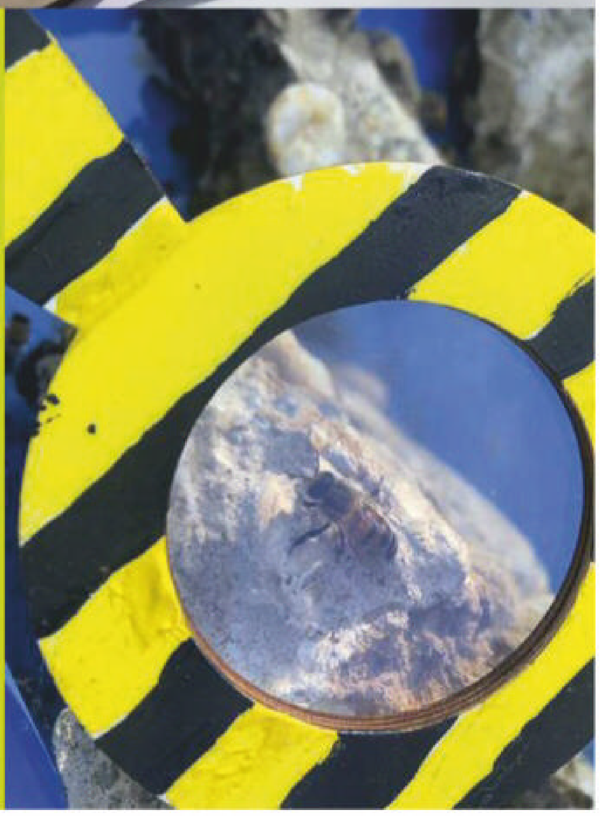

LES BUNYAN

Tweet of the day

If you're one of the many people enjoying the more audible birdsong at the moment who wishes they could identify which birds are singing the RSPB Guide to Birdsong *is here to help. The book includes a CD and digital download featuring more than 100 songs and calls to help you distinguish between birds while out on walks or in your garden. It costs £15.99.* ***rspb.co.uk***

RSPB GUIDE TO
BIRDSONG
Adrian Thomas
BLOOMSBURY

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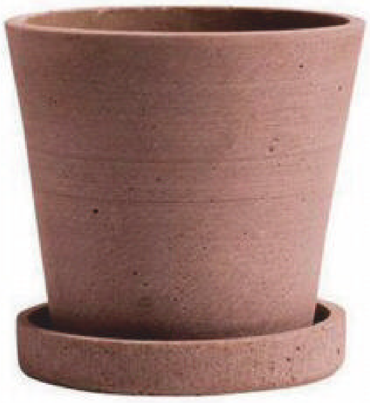

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Hay Flowerpot with Saucer, in polystone
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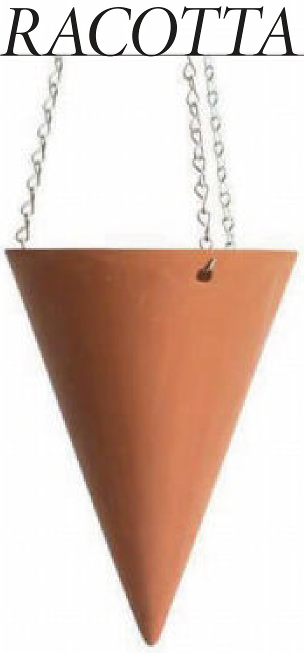
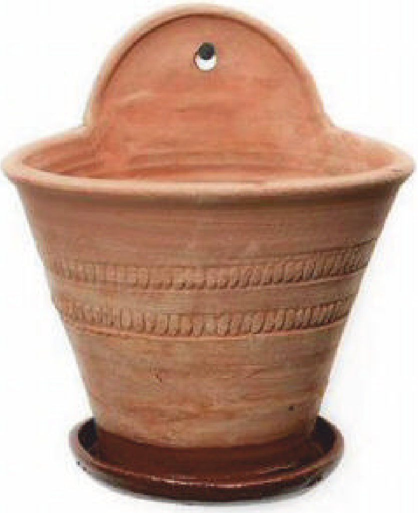


HANGING GARDEN
Terracotta Hanging Basket
D 19cm x H 26cm, £18.99, Crocus
crocus.co.uk



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Terracotta Wall Pot
D 24 x H 27cm, £61, Manufactum
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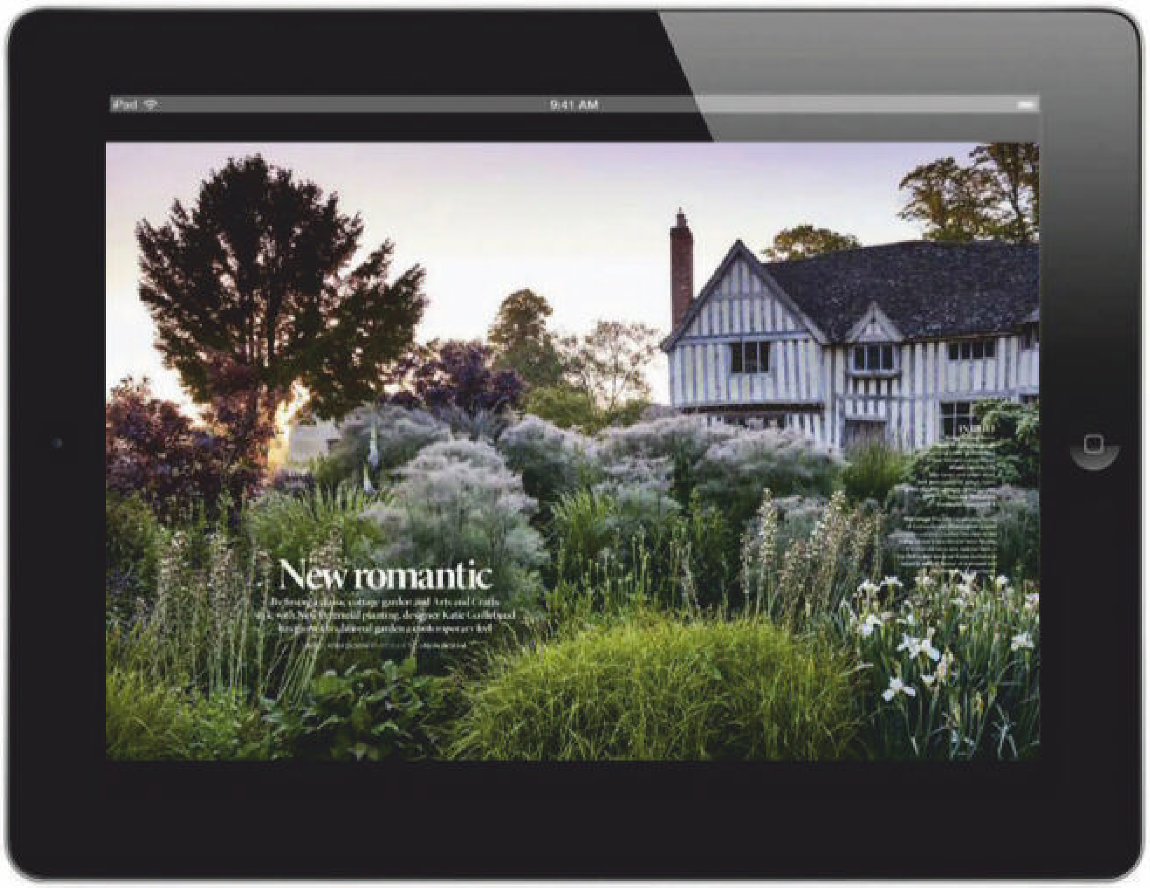
June plants



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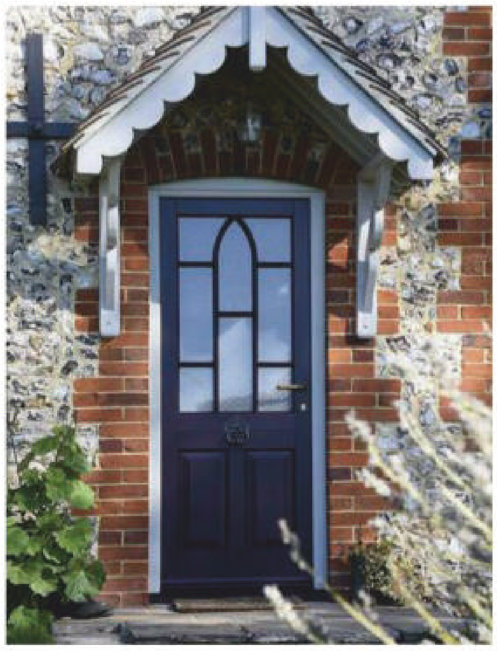

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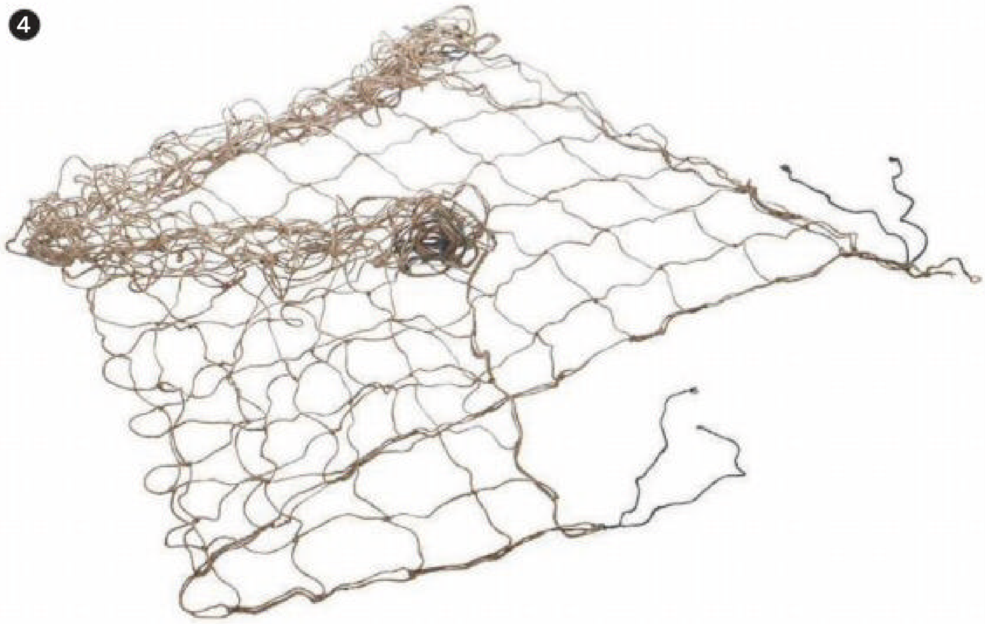

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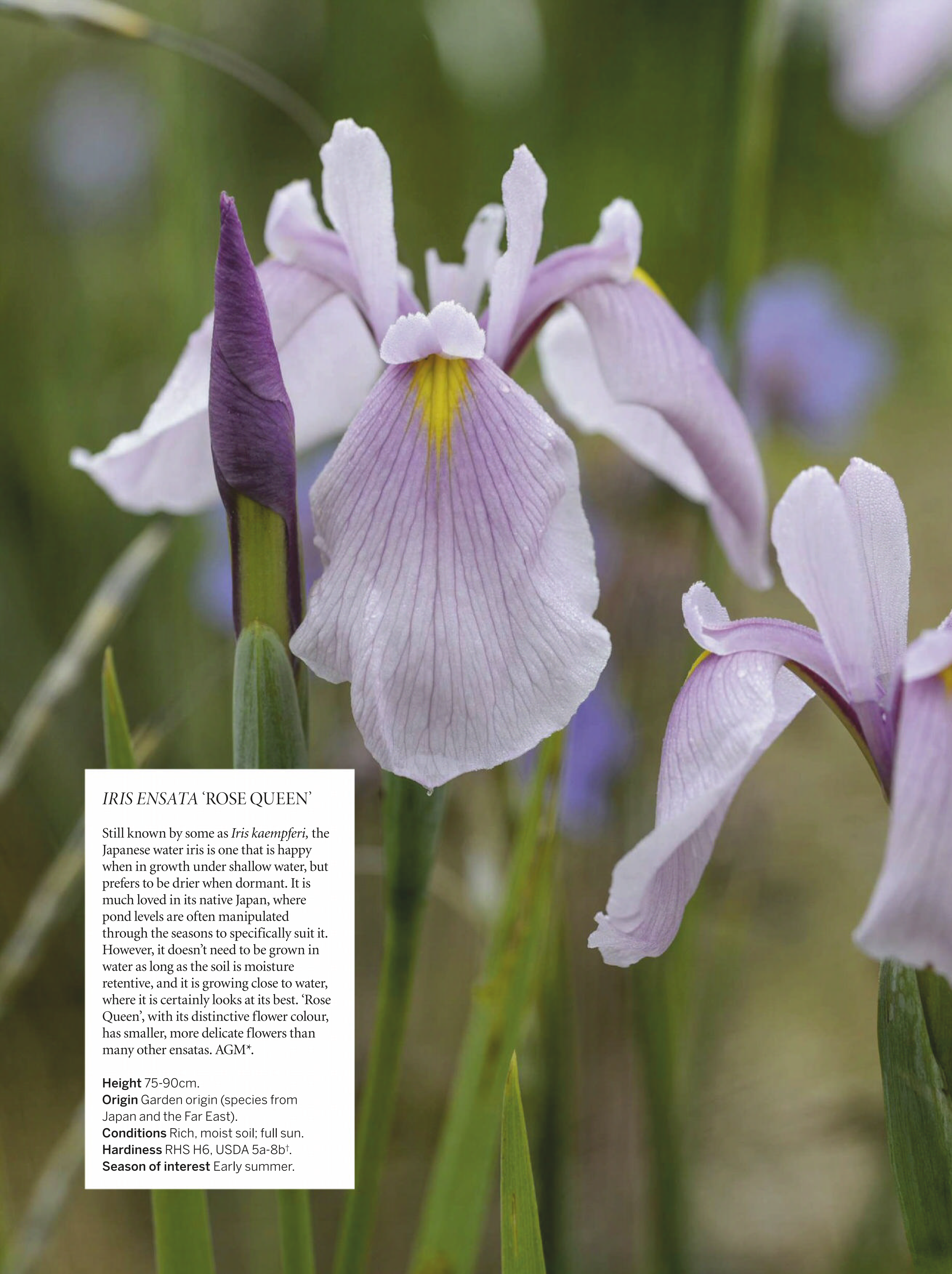
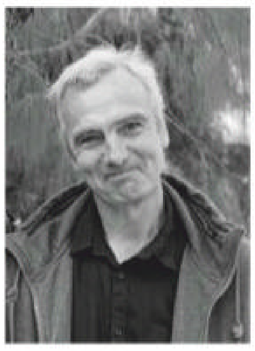


IRIS ENSATA 'ROSE QUEEN'

Still known by some as *Iris kaempferi*, the Japanese water iris is one that is happy when in growth under shallow water, but prefers to be drier when dormant. It is much loved in its native Japan, where pond levels are often manipulated through the seasons to specifically suit it. However, it doesn't need to be grown in water as long as the soil is moisture retentive, and it is growing close to water, where it is certainly looks at its best. 'Rose Queen', with its distinctive flower colour, has smaller, more delicate flowers than many other ensatas. AGM*.

Height 75-90cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from Japan and the Far East).
Conditions Rich, moist soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b†.
Season of interest Early summer.

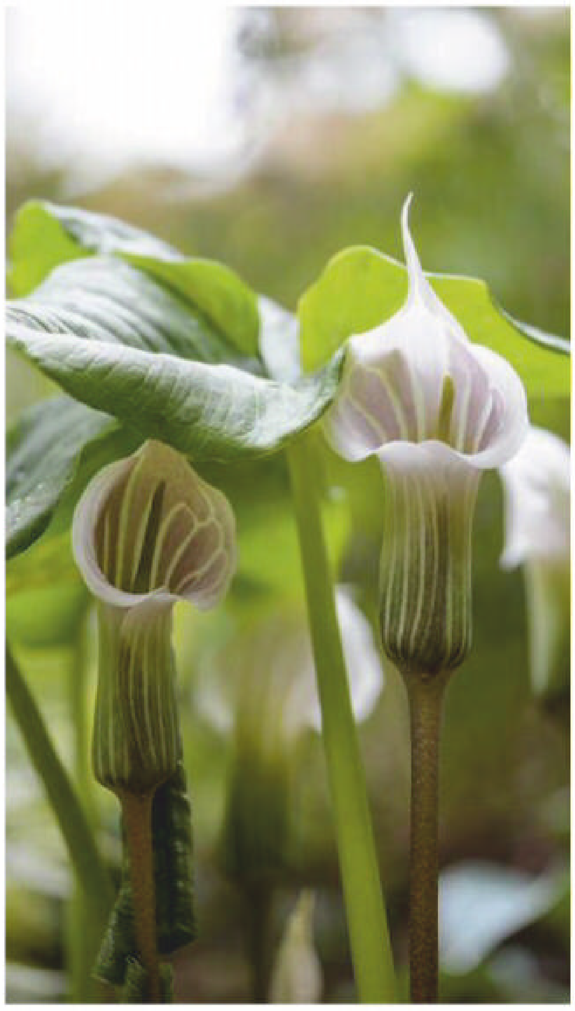

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

June plants

As late spring turns to early summer, Keith finds pleasure in a delicately coloured Japanese water iris, an exotic-looking aroid and an unusual form of a red hot poker

WORDS KEITH WILEY PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Keith Wiley
runs Wildside
nursery in Devon
wileyatwildside.com



ARISAEMA CANDIDISSIMUM

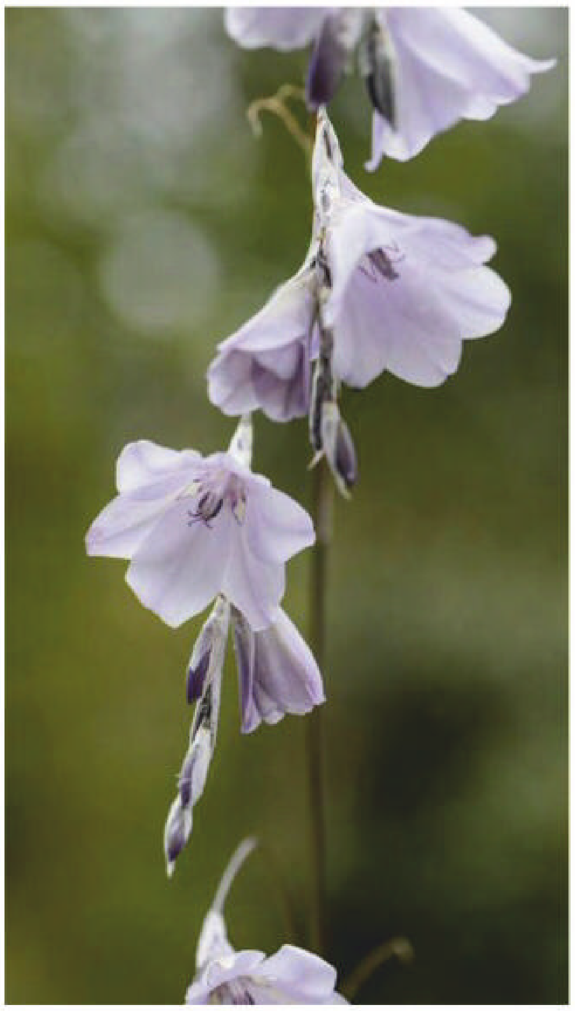
The distinctive stripy pink spathes of this exotic-looking aroid make it one of the best arisaemas for flowering. It emerges from the ground as late as early June, and quickly produces flowers before the leaves appear. When it is settled these trifoliate leaves can be as much as 45cm across, at which time, it becomes a very handsome foliage plant for late summer. The first frost of autumn will finish this display, and it will spend the next seven or eight months below ground as rounded and flattened, fleshy tubers, so make sure you mark its position well and protect it with a thick mulch. AGM.

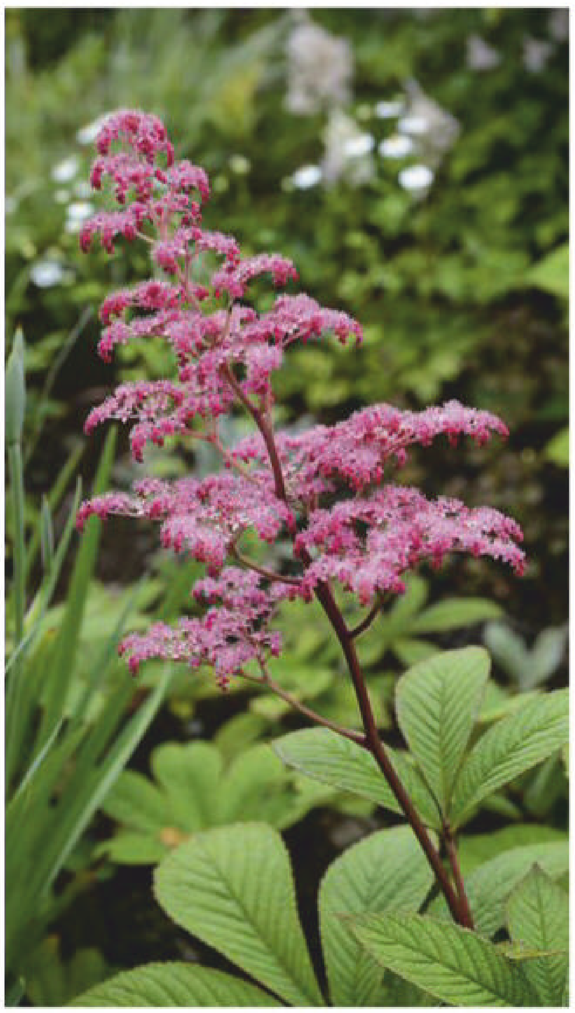
Height 30cm.
Origin China.
Conditions Warm spot in part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-7b.
Season of interest All summer.

DIERAMA PULCHERRIMUM

Wand flowers, or more romantically angel's fishing rods, are one of my favourite perennials. With their wiry, evergreen, grassy leaves, many visitors ask us what the flowering grasses are. Dieramas are actually bulbs from South Africa, most of the species growing at altitude, which makes them hardy in most of the UK. This species flowers later than most, usually through July, with pink, purple, white, or in this case pale amethyst, bells hanging beneath wiry flower stems. The silvery seedheads that follow are also attractive, moving in the slightest breeze.

Height 1-2m.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3-4, USDA 8a-10b.
Season of interest Late summer for flowers.





RODGERSIA PINNATA 'BUCKLAND BEAUTY'

A dark-pink seedling we raised from *R. pinnata* 'Superba' while at the Garden House. In the wild, rodgersias often grow on stream banks and like a moisture-retentive soil, without being waterlogged. After flowering the flowerheads in this cultivar turn dark red, and are excellent for use in dried flower arrangements. The handsome crinkled foliage appears late in the spring, with the flowering stems pushing up first, so they are vulnerable at this time to late spring frosts. This late leafing means it is possible to grow early spring bulbs among the roots. AGM.

Height 1m.
Origin Garden origin, species from China.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil in full sun/part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest All summer.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

Thank you, Sylvia

Sylvia left a gift in her Will to help conquer Stroke

The first we knew of Sylvia was when we received notification of the gift she'd left us in her Will. Shortly after, a beautiful story of a much-loved woman began to unfurl.

Friends remembered Sylvia's kind-heart and her wish to help others. She spent part of her adult-life caring for her mother, and developed a passion for medicine. Becoming a medical secretary was her next step and, in the course of her career, she discovered the devastating impact a stroke could have on people and their families. She saw that research and treatment were vastly under-funded, and she decided to remember the Stroke Association in her Will.

Sylvia's gift has helped fund our work to conquer stroke. She's supported research to prevent and treat stroke, and she's helped care for survivors. And that's something you can do too – in the same way.

If you would like to learn more about remembering the Stroke Association in your Will, please get in touch.

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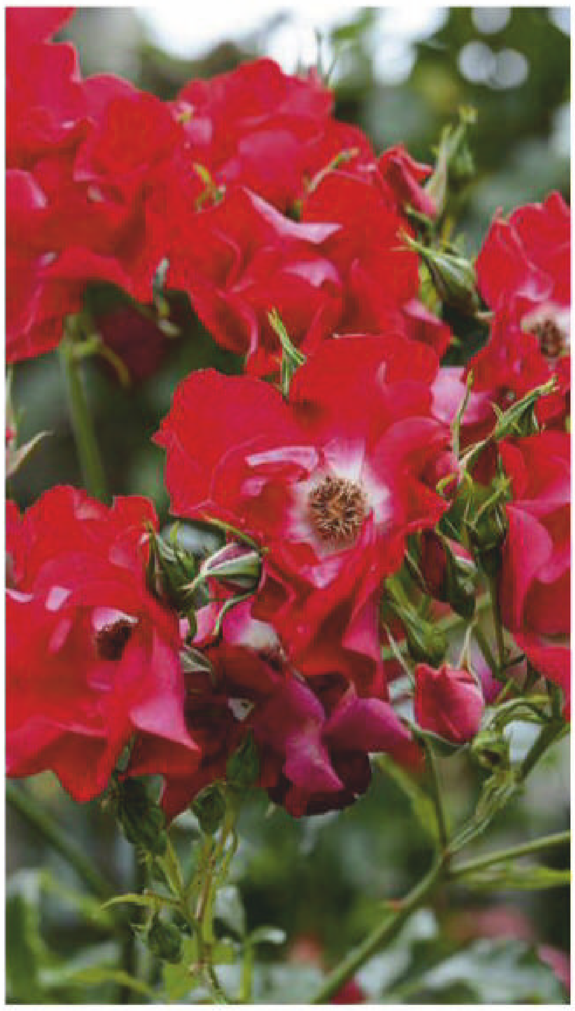
Instead of having a closely packed spike of flowers, *Kniphofia thomsonii* looks more like an aloe, with widely spaced, soft-orange flowers



ROSA 'DORTMUND'

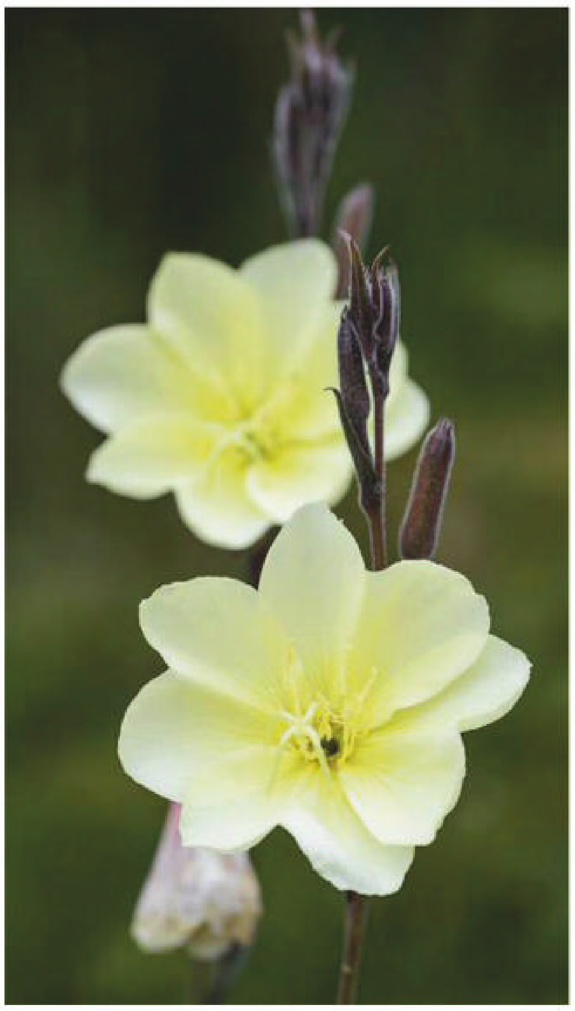
A climbing rose that offers glossy green foliage and clusters of white-centred, red flowers throughout summer and into autumn, which are then followed by attractive orange hips. For 40 years this rose has unfailingly delivered clean foliage – without any resort to chemicals – and has produced masses of flowers for us in a part of the country that has a very high rainfall, in which most roses refuse to grow in for more than a year or two without regular spraying. It has thorns, so the annual tidy up and tying in tends to be a painful process, but it is so worth it. AGM.

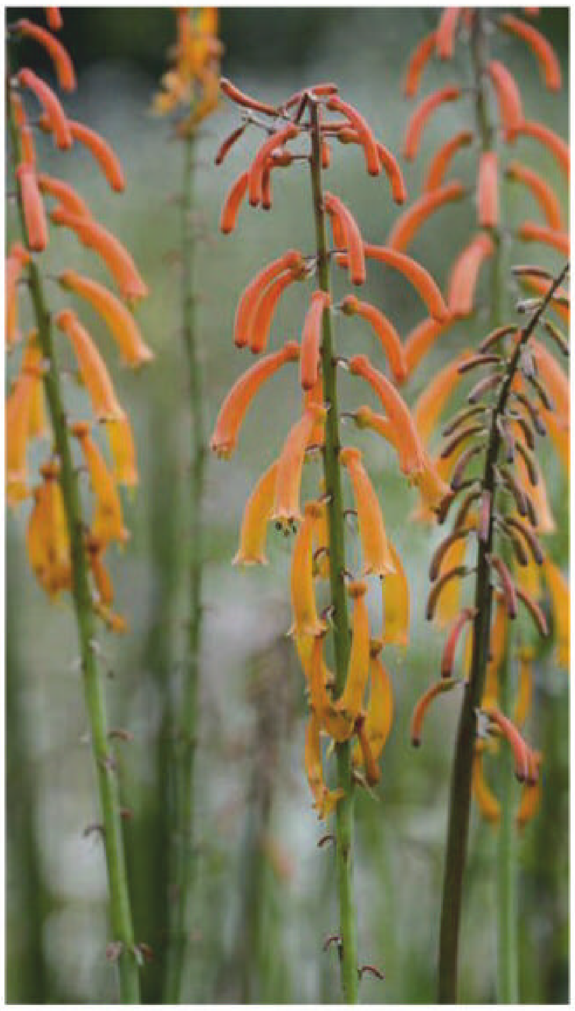
Height 3m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-10b.
Season of interest All summer.

OENOTHERA STRICTA 'SULPHUREA'

This is the pale-yellow version of the Chilean evening primrose, and is a short-lived perennial or biennial that I hope never to be without. It will self-seed so, as long as there is bare ground for the seedlings to colonise, there should really be no reason to lose it. As its name suggests, the scented flowers open a pale yellow in late afternoon, each one turning by the morning to a wonderful apricot colour for its final few hours before dropping. The whole effect is accentuated by the fact that it has a purple-red flush to the buds and stems.

Height 60-90cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from Chile).
Conditions Any well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-10b.
Season of interest All summer.





KNIPHOFIA THOMSONII

This *Kniphofia* is very different to most people's vision of a red hot poker. Instead of having a closely packed spike of flowers, this species looks more like an aloe, with widely spaced, soft-orange flowers, each gracefully curving downwards. Its growth habit is also different as, like the flowers, instead of making a sizeable clump, it runs gently forming a widely spaced colony of rosettes, each with a limited number of decumbent leaves. Repeat flowering through the summer. If there is one catch, it would have to be that it is not quite as hardy as some.

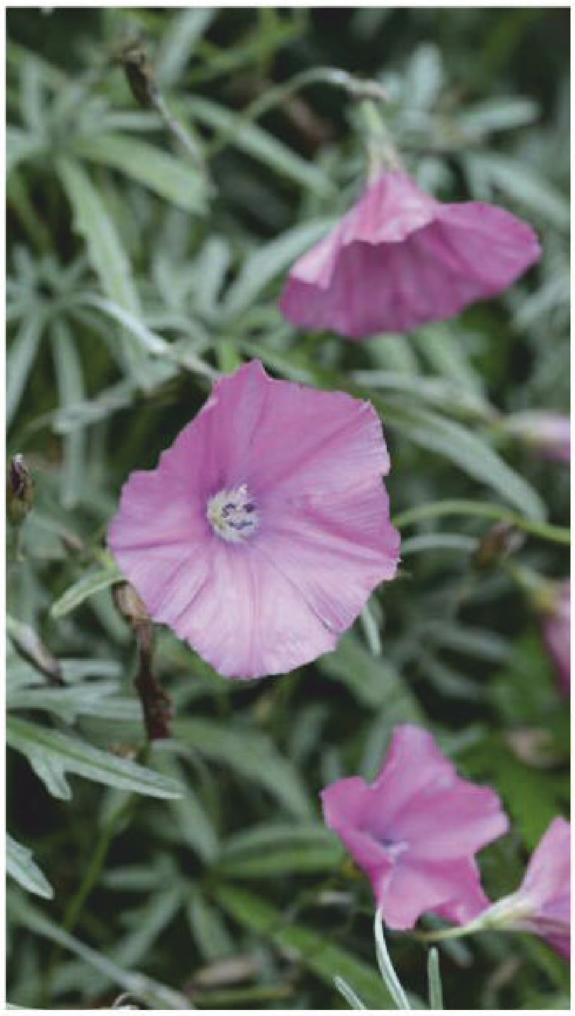
Height 60-90cm.
Origin East Africa.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun to light shade.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest Summer.

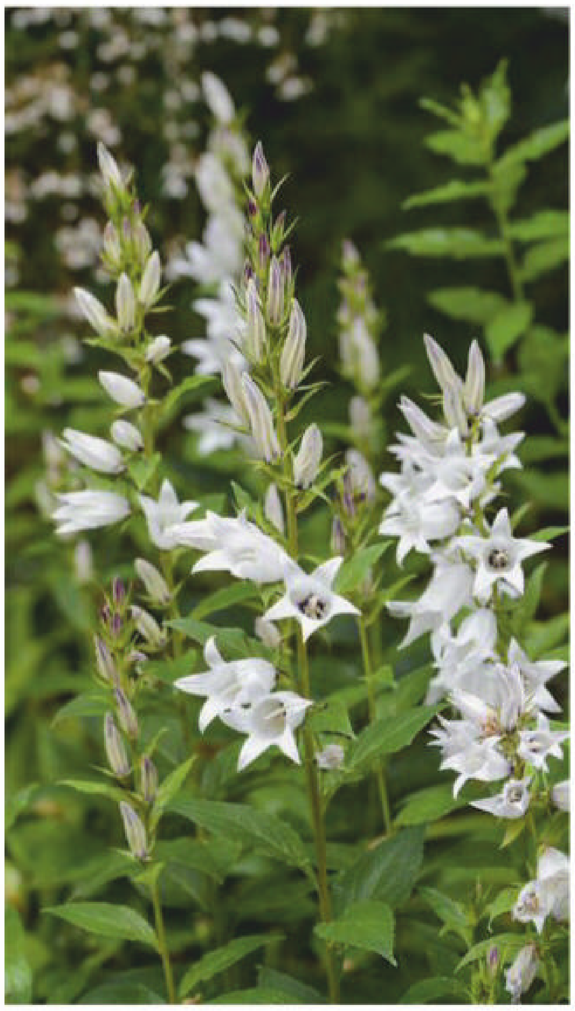
In Crete, where we first caught sight of *Convolvulus althaeoides*, it carpeted tilled ground among olive groves, and covered sizeable, sunny roadside verges

CONVOLVULUS ALTHAEOIDES

A bindweed that I actually love. It was more than 25 years ago when I first managed to get a tiny root to survive and grow. In Crete, where we first caught sight of it, it carpeted tilled ground among some olive groves, and covered sizeable, steep, sunny roadside verges. It was not until I managed to replicate those conditions did it deign to settle in and spread. Now it runs underground, spreading its beautiful silver foliage and clean pink flowers through a soft purple-blue catmint, a wonderful combination lasting for many weeks.

Height Scrambling to 60cm.
Origin Mediterranean.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3-4, USDA 6a-8b.
Season of interest All summer.





CAMPANULA LATIFOLIA 'BUCKLAND'

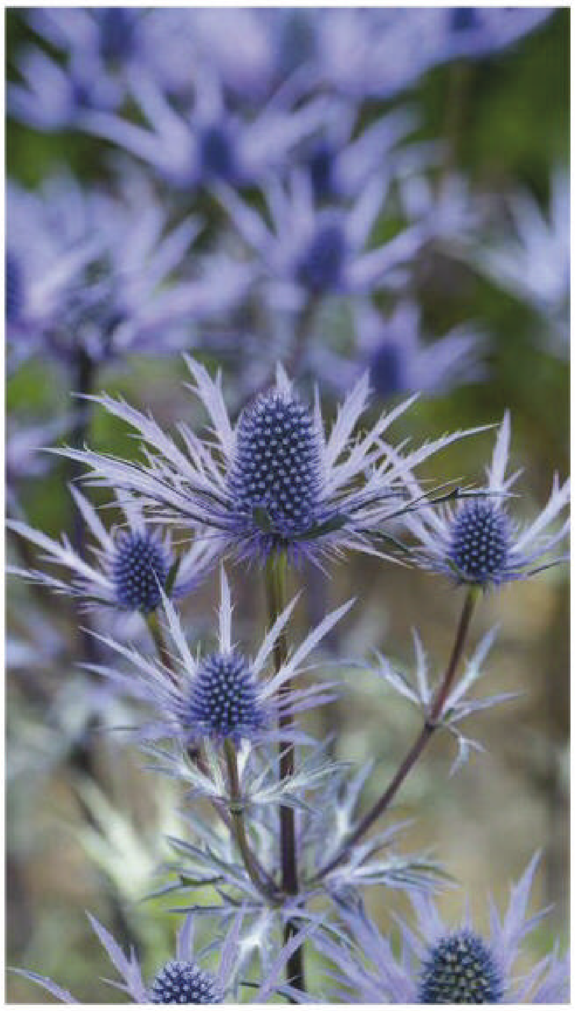
Another plant we raised while we were at the Garden House. A seedling from the pure-white *C. latifolia* var. *alba*, the purple eye and faintest flush of that colour in the white, elevates this into a classy looking perennial. Although upright in growth, I have never needed to stake this plant, and because the clump occupies very little ground space, it can provide very useful vertical accent points among lower-growing perennials. After flowering the skeletal seedheads are also attractive for a short period before they are best cut back.

Height 1m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Europe and western Asia).
Conditions Any soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Summer.

ERYNGIUM X ZABELII

Eryngiums are more commonly known as sea hollies because of their prickly leaves and because the natural habitat of some species is in coastal areas. In a garden setting though, all they ask for is a sunny, well-drained spot, where for many weeks in summer, they will produce their startling, cone-shaped flowerheads surrounded by a ruff of vicious-looking bracts. There are several cultivars available of this hybrid varying slightly in the intensity of the blue, both in the flowerheads and the flower stems, but all are good. Easily propagated by root cuttings in late winter.

Height 60-90cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest Summer.



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REAP THE REWARDS

With any risk of frosts
now in the past, Aaron's biggest
challenge is finding homes
for all his seedlings, but he also
finds some time to enjoy
the alpine fruits of his labours

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN
ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

The danger of frost may have passed, but as ever in the kitchen garden, there is a fresh challenge to face: where to put all the seedlings? This is peak growing season, with early sown crops in full flow and later sowings of squashes, pumpkins and climbing beans putting on growth so fast it almost seems to be happening in real time.

The good news is that the rush is coming to an end, and with it the time-consuming business of pricking out, potting on and planting. From now on, my focus will be on maintaining that succession of salad leaves – so essential to every meal at this time of the year – and getting in a second sowing of beetroot and peas. Recently, I have found that by sowing again in June I can enjoy a second harvest of peas in late summer and early autumn.

That's not to say that this isn't a busy time. I always say that if I could guarantee help with one job in the vegetable garden it would be harvesting. People often overlook it, but there is an art to picking produce at its peak, and making the best possible use of it. If you can, make a note of any crops that perform particularly well – and of course those that disappoint. It might feel like a chore but you will be glad of it when you come to putting together next year's seed order.

And then of course there is the inevitable watering and, for container crops, feeding, so crucial at this time of year when plants are putting on so much growth and starting to fruit. It seems so obvious, yet we often forget that vegetables and fruit are predominantly made of water. If you want succulent produce, there are no shortcuts. ❒

Jobs for June

Plant out brassica seedlings. In the ground, they will need to be around 45cm apart. I like to grow kale in a large pot, too, and these plants can be closer together – around 20cm seems to work well. These are hungry crops, and will need a good rich soil. They are also extremely popular with pigeons and that notorious scourge of the vegetable garden, the cabbage white caterpillar. I try to steer clear of chemical treatments and find that the best solution to both problems is to cover the plants in netting. Just make sure it stands clear of the leaves, or the butterflies will lay their eggs on them anyway.

Tomatoes should be in the ground by now. Don't forget, a fully laden tomato plant is a heavy thing and will need a sturdy support. I like to use a chestnut stake, around 1.5m tall. Always put the stake in first, so that you're not driving it through the root system of your plants later on. As the plants develop, remove the lower leaves and any lateral shoots – those that appear at an angle between the stem and the branches proper.

This is a good time for a second sowing of climbing beans, to extend the cropping season. Now that the soil is nicely warmed up, you can get away with sowing them direct. But as always, put the supports in first.

Make sure all plants that need support – beans, tomatoes, broad beans, peas – have them and where, appropriate, are firmly tied in. Winds can still be strong in the summer and as crops develop, plants will get heavier and so more vulnerable to being blown over and breaking.

Hygiene matters, in the garden as in so many other areas of life. As plants grow, keep them tidy by removing any old or damaged leaves, and keeping the soil around them clear of weeds. This will help to eliminate hiding places for pests – and help you to spot any problems with the plants and tackle them early on.

Crops in containers will be putting on a lot of growth now, and taking up a lot of nutrients from the compost they are planted in. You will need to compensate for this with regular feeding – I do it once a week, adding liquid seaweed to their water. You may also need to move pots further apart, to ensure that plants are getting enough light and air is circulating freely.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CROPS

Soft fruit should be coming into its own now. I love to grow **alpine strawberries,** with their tiny, intensely scarlet, violet-scented fruit like something from a fairy tale. And can there be any greater pleasure than a handful of summer raspberries, picked and eaten while still warm from the cane?

If you are growing on a small scale, this is the way to consume these precious fruits – as soon as possible after picking, and with little or no intervention in the kitchen. Sprinkle them over granola or yoghurt, or eat with cream or good ice-cream for pudding. No recipe could compete. If like me you are dealing with larger quantities, bag and freeze the fruit ready for a jam-making session later in the year when things are a little less hectic in the garden.

June's other great gastronomic treasure is the **new potato**. It is a joyful time when we lift the first of the 'Charlotte' potatoes – my favourite salad cultivar – and either boil them to eat with a little butter, or use in a delicious potato salad that comes in a recipe via Great Dixter's estate manager, Perry Rodriguez, from his mother Aida.

For Aaron's tasty potato salad recipe, please go to gardensillustrated.com/recipes

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> I find nature amazing. I love seeing the changing of the seasons and how the scenery adapts

GARDENING TALENT

CHANTAL RICH

With her traineeship at West Dean Gardens funded by horticultural charity Perennial, Chantal is set for a new career in horticulture

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love Bluebells: I remember childhood walks in the countryside and being amazed at the mass of them and the magical carpet of colour they create with such small, delicate flowers. I still love to ride my horse up Slindon Folly, not far from West Dean in West Sussex, to see the wonderful show of bluebells there.

What was your career before horticulture? Horses are my life's obsession and until recently they were also my career, but last summer I decided it was time for a change. I'd originally stumbled into horticulture while looking for somewhere to keep my horse. I ended up not only finding stabling but also a summer job in the attached nursery, which turned into five years of employment that I loved. Sadly, the site was sold for development and I went back to working with horses. I'd just started looking for new employment when I came across the trainee position at West Dean Gardens.

Favourite landscape that has influenced you I love wandering the South Downs with my dogs or on horse back. I love the rolling hills and ancient yew trees. I find nature amazing, and love seeing the changing of the seasons and how the scenery adapts.

Three most worthwhile tips Waterproofs: they're essential in the UK; I always have some on hand and wear lots of thin layers for the ever changeable weather. Hand cream: I have it everywhere – my car, work bag and several places round the house – to keep dry, cracking hands at bay. Your hands are your most valuable tool after all. And 'ne'er cast a clout till May be out' is a phrase I was taught in my nursery days to warn against the risk of planting out delicate summer plants before the last frost could attack them. I've never forgotten it.

Invaluable training Secateurs are one of the most important tools to have on you and we are regularly reminded in our training sessions of the importance of sharp tools to give a clean cut to a plant that we're pruning. This is to prevent the risk of pests and diseases getting into the plant, which is more likely from a jagged cut.

One easy thing that every gardener can do to be more sustainable Encourage wildlife into your garden as a natural pest control, therefore minimising any pesticides or chemicals used. A simple way is to put up a bird box or create a stumpery.

What principles have guided your attitude to gardening Respect for the natural world and a good work ethic.

Contact cfsparrow@hotmail.co.uk, westdean.org.uk.

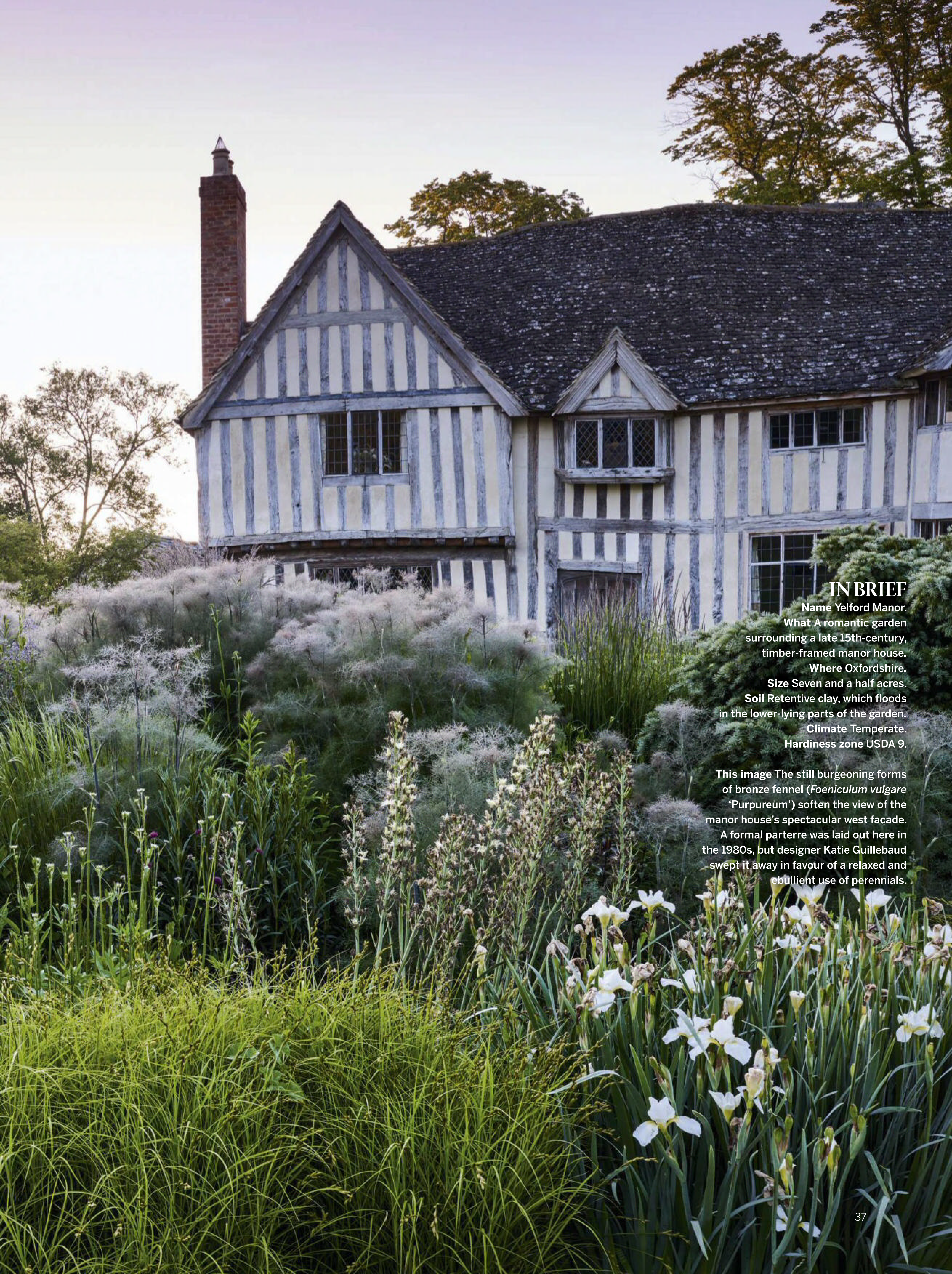
Instagram @thehedgesparrow

For more details about Perennial go to perennial.org.uk

New romantic

By fusing a classic cottage garden and Arts and Crafts style with New Perennial planting, designer Katie Guillebaud has given a traditional garden a contemporary feel

WORDS **RORY DUSOIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



IN BRIEF

Name Yelford Manor.
What A romantic garden surrounding a late 15th-century, timber-framed manor house.
Where Oxfordshire.
Size Seven and a half acres.
Soil Retentive clay, which floods in the lower-lying parts of the garden.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

This image The still burgeoning forms of bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum') soften the view of the manor house's spectacular west façade. A formal parterre was laid out here in the 1980s, but designer Katie Guillebaud swept it away in favour of a relaxed and ebullient use of perennials.

Walls were bedecked with roses, and courtyards planted generously, drawing on English cottage garden and Arts and Crafts traditions

I was excited to meet the unassuming garden designer Katie Guillebaud at the site of one of her most prestigious projects to date. Described as 'the best and certainly the most picturesque, large timber-framed house in the country', the spectacular late 15th-century manor house sitting in the lowlands of rural Oxfordshire has a diminutive parish church at the end of the garden, is partially surrounded by the remnants of a moat, and has a stream curving prettily around and through it.

Katie served an apprenticeship at Christopher Bradley-Hole's design office and has run her own practice for the past 15 years. Her vision for the garden was to bring a greater informality and romance to the space. One of her first concerns was to alter the access: cars had hitherto arrived unceremoniously via an awkward turn from a farm track that brought them right on top of the house. Now there is a much more generous approach, in keeping with the grandeur of the property, and the sight of parked vehicles is no longer allowed to interrupt its 15th-century façades. As you drive up, the manor heaves into view circuitously and a pretty willow-leaf shaped flowerbed, inhabited by some fine multi-stemmed specimens of *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*, intervenes between the house and the parking area.

A cluster of farm buildings inhabited what is now the northern part of the garden, some of which dated from the 19th century. Although significantly thinned out, a number of these have been retained and given a new lease of life, not least of which the 'pool barn', which acts as a pavilion to the new swimming pool. This is linked to the house via paths through a newly installed wildflower meadow. But by far Katie's most transformative intervention was a sweeping transfiguration in the tone of the planting about the house. The garden had last been significantly renovated in the 1980s, when an attempt to recreate a period garden to match the style of the house was made. This resulted in a great deal of topiary and hedges in yew, with the only accommodation for flowers being some small parterres. Whether more or less historically accurate, the effect was somewhat staid and gloomy, and the new owner felt strongly that the rambling manor deserved a more romantic treatment.

Katie set to work by judiciously removing significant elements of the topiary around the house to open up views and lighten the effect, while retaining some for established structure. All available walls were bedecked with roses, and courtyards around the house planted generously, drawing on the English cottage gardening and Arts and Crafts traditions. Plants that sprawl agreeably, and self-seed, abound – bronze fennel, white valerian, foxgloves – all combined with yet more heavily scented roses and bearded irises at ground level.

A broader swathe of planting to the west of the house appears looser-structured still, without the architecture of the house to confine it. Here there is a subtle modulation of the plant palette towards the New Perennial, in which strictly structural elements such as architecture or topiary are eschewed as a means of defining the planting. Instead, the perennials themselves must provide structure, albeit in a looser way. So, bearded irises next to the house, which flower briefly in their gloriously romantic way before collapsing, give way to harder working *Iris siberica* here, where long-lasting structure is more important than an achingly exquisite blossom or two. Katie has used grasses to great effect. *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflor*a 'Karl Foerster' is a case in point: although it carries itself with all the natural grace of a wild plant, contributing to the informal impression of the planting, its strong columnar form (which outlasts the winter) allows it to act as a structural anchor for the planting around it, with its repetition drawing the eye around the bed. Thus, one plant manages to contribute at once structure and informality.

Great gardens, such as Sissinghurst and Great Dixter, pioneered the use of an informal, romantic style of planting to complement a grand manor house. Katie has gone one step further here by introducing elements of a yet more modern planting idiom to accompany this particular fine old house. There aren't many straight lines in a mediaeval timber-framed dwelling – it looms and sprawls and rambles where it pleases. So, Katie's generous treatment of the garden seems to fit perfectly. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Katie's work at **kggardendesign.co.uk**

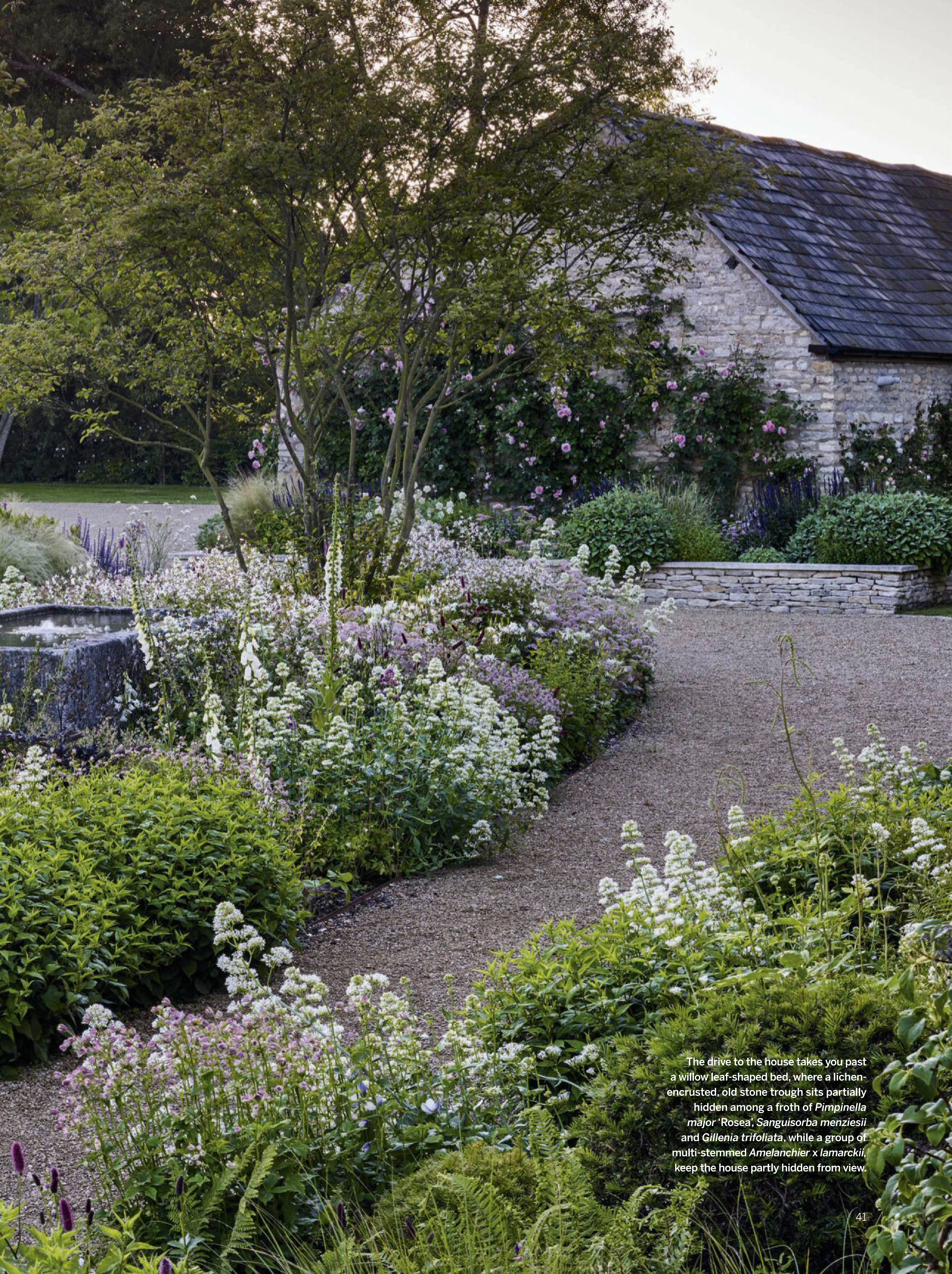
Right In this intimate courtyard on the house's south side the walls are smothered in the highly fragrant *Rosa* The Generous Gardener (= 'Ausdrawn'), which sets the tone for a romantic mix of soft planting that also includes the tall white flowers of *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus', the rich pink *Rosa* Gertrude Jekyll (= 'Ausbord') and the scented pale-blue orris root, *Iris pallida*. The soft grass *Stipa tenuissima*, alongside the pretty blue *Geranium* 'Brookside', *Digitalis lutea* and *Salvia* x *sylvestris* 'Mainacht' all add to the charm.

Combining styles

Yelford Manor displays the influence of two different planting styles. The use of yew topiary, walls smothered in fragrant roses and self-seeding plants billowing indulgently to soften path edges, all bring to mind the classic Robinsonian planting style of Great Dixter, Sissinghurst and Gravetye Manor, inspired by the ideas of garden writer William Robinson (1838-1935). Despite Robinson's professed aversion to straight lines, he perfected a style in which herbaceous plants seemingly ran wild, but all set within more or less rectilinear boundaries defining different garden areas. The strong backbone provided by these external elements allows the plantings within them to be ephemeral, with a focus on flowering performance.

However, at Yelford broader swathes of planting to the west of the house display influence from the New Perennial Movement. This more recent style, spearheaded by its most famous practitioner the Dutch designer Piet Oudolf, manages to eschew straight lines more absolutely. Rather than relying on external elements to provide structure, the herbaceous plants themselves must do this. Grasses and other perennials with good bones or year-round presence must take precedence over flowering performance for the style to be successful.

As you drive up to the manor house, a pretty willow-leaf shaped flowerbed, inhabited by some fine multi-stemmed specimens of *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii* intervenes



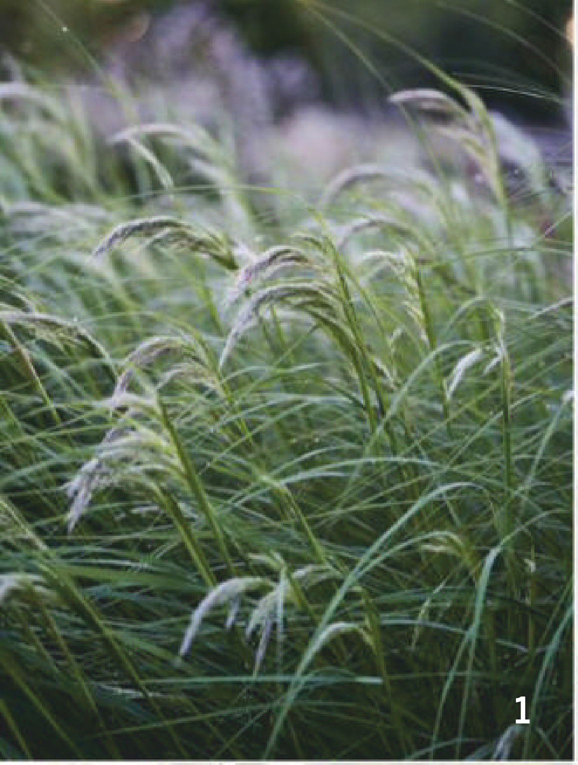
The drive to the house takes you past a willow leaf-shaped bed, where a lichen-encrusted, old stone trough sits partially hidden among a froth of *Pimpinella major* 'Rosea', *Sanguisorba menziesii* and *Gillenia trifoliata*, while a group of multi-stemmed *Amelanchier x lamarckii*, keep the house partly hidden from view.

Top Around two secluded benches Katie has used more of a meadow style, dotting individual plants, including *Pimpinella major* 'Rosea', *Linaria purpurea* 'Canon Went', *Verbascum phoeniceum* 'Violetta', *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Greenapples' and *Cenolophium denudatum*, in a repeated pattern.

Below In this large bed, the planting has more of a New Perennial feel with grasses such as *Stipa lessingiana* and *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', mixed with broad clumps *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum', S*alvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Taurus (= 'Blotau').

Top Beneath an umbrella-pruned *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*, is a mix of *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus', *Gillenia trifoliata*, *Digitalis* x *mertonensis* and astrantias 'Roma' and 'Buckland'. Yew balls by the house add structure and mirror the box in pots by the door, which sit on cobbles recycled from one of the old barns.

Below Katie chose to leave some of the original yew hedging in place but created openings to allow views through to the orchard. Here, close to the house, their solid geometry is tempered by clumps of *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low', *Lavandula* x *intermedia* Dutch Group and the grass *Achnatherum calamagrostis*.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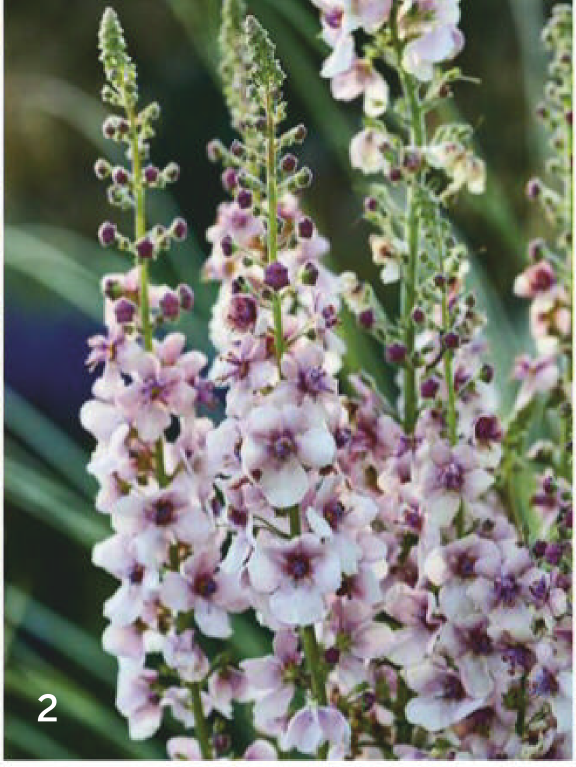
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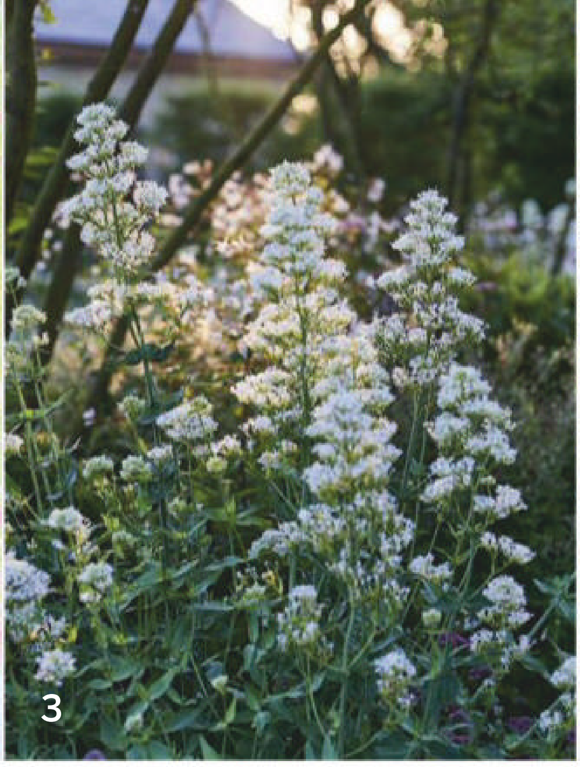
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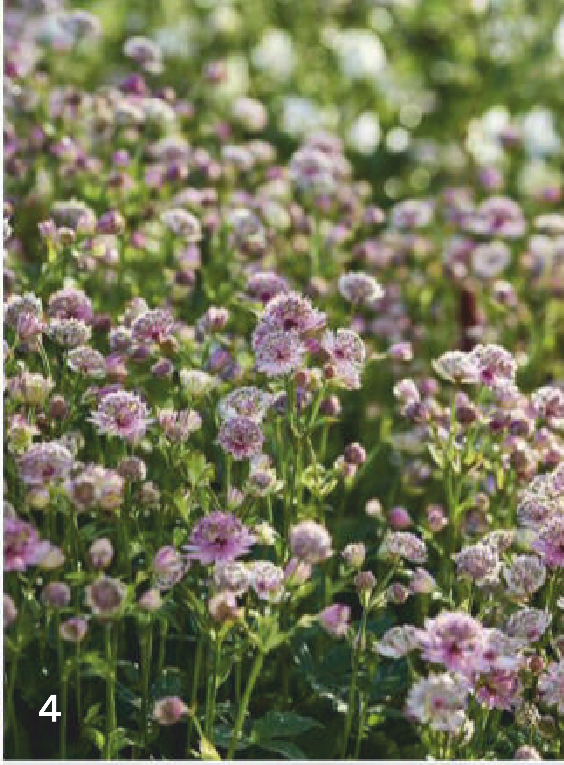
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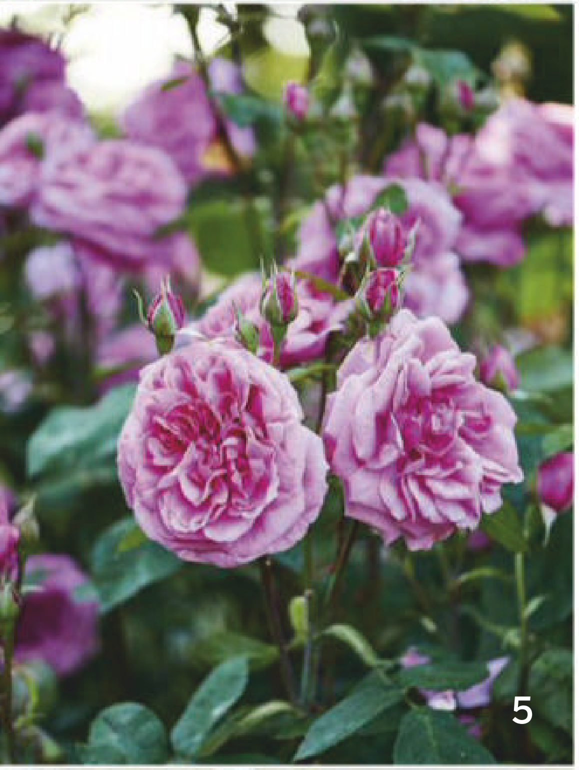
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Achnatherum calamagrostis*
A gracefully arching grass and one of the most-pleasingly mobile in a breeze. The flowers turn a pleasant biscuit-brown colour as they ripen. 1m. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b[†].

2 *Verbascum* 'Raspberry Ripple'
One of several hybrid mulleins that have become fashionable of late. It has cottage garden charm but is neither too imposing, nor very long-lived. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus'
Can flower three times in one season if cut back promptly when the flowers go over, which will also restrict its self-seeding tendencies. 80cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

4 *Astrantia* 'Roma'
Astrantrias have a tendency to collapse early in the season, but 'Roma' is much better in this regard. Its flowers are an intriguing faded pink. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

5 *Rosa* Gertrude Jekyll (= 'Ausbord')
Perhaps the most popular of David Austin's English rose hybrids. This may in large part be due to the scent, which is delicious and freely produced. 1.8m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

6 *Digitalis lutea*
In theory this is a perennial species of foxglove, but truth be told *Digitalis lutea* is barely any longer lived than *D. purpurea*. Luckily, it also shares the self-seeding propensities of the common foxglove. Produces a multitude of very slender spires. 1m. AGM. RHS H6.

7 *Aruncus* 'Horatio'
The best known hybrid between the hulking *A. dioicus* and the diminutive *A. aethusifolius*. Short-lived in flower, but beautiful in all stages of growth and decay. 1m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

8 *Pimpinella major* 'Rosea'
This follows on from *Chaerophyllum hirsutum* as an early, fresh, natural-looking umbellifer that is very spare of leaf. Unfussy, but enjoys damp conditions. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

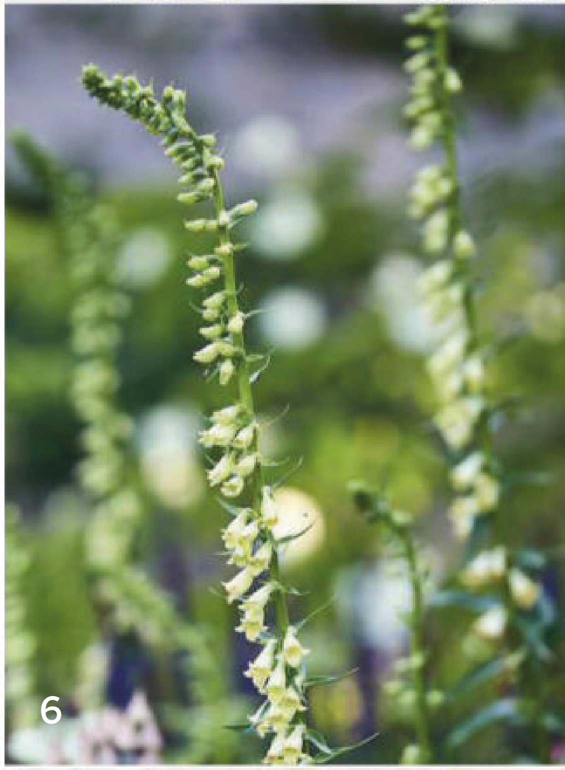
9 *Linaria purpurea* 'Canon Went'
A quintessential cottage garden plant that is very ready to spread by seed. If you cut it down to prevent this, it will re-grow and flower again in the same season. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

10 *Stipa gigantea*
The giant oat-grass flowers arise from an evergreen clump of leaves more than 2m tall but are perfectly see-through. They look spectacular gilded by evening light. 2.5m. AGM. RHS H4.

11 *Gillenia trifoliata*
Eye-catching in flower, when its pedicels are so slender they give the illusion that the blooms are floating, but equally arresting in decay. 1m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

12 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
The much-cherished, deciduous grass with a markedly columnar habit that leaves one of the finest and most durable winter skeletons of all. 1.8m AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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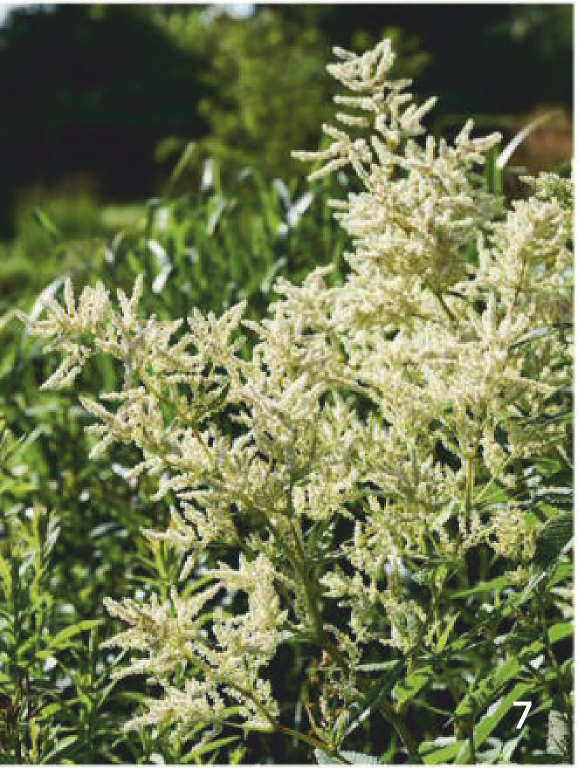
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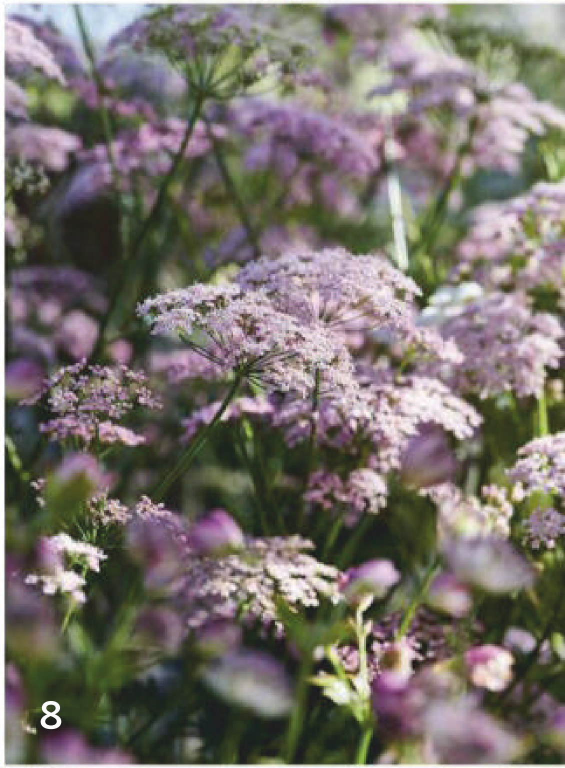
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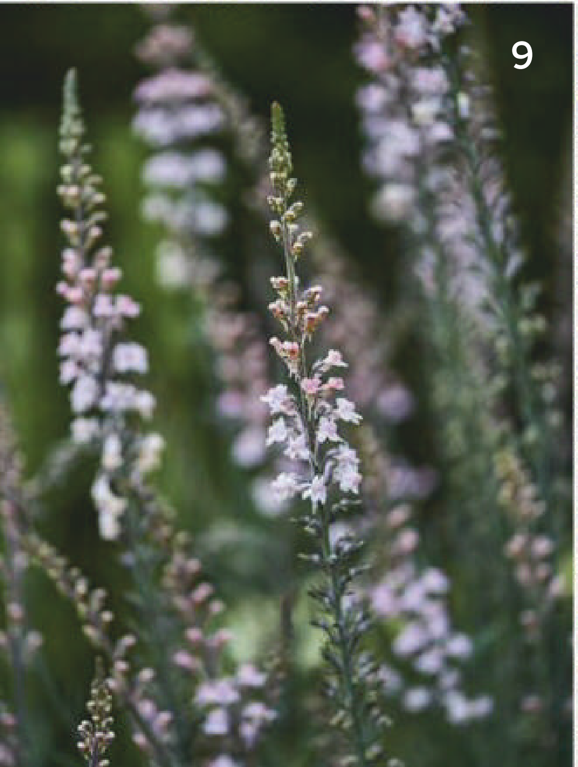
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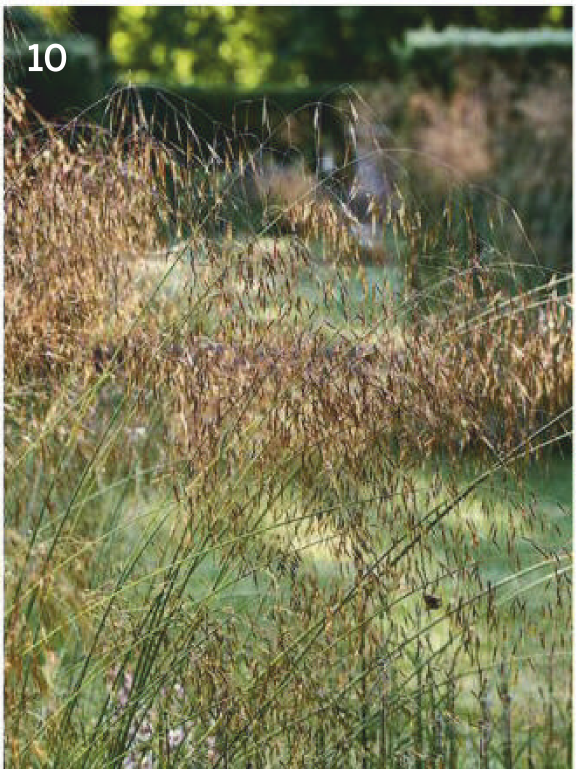
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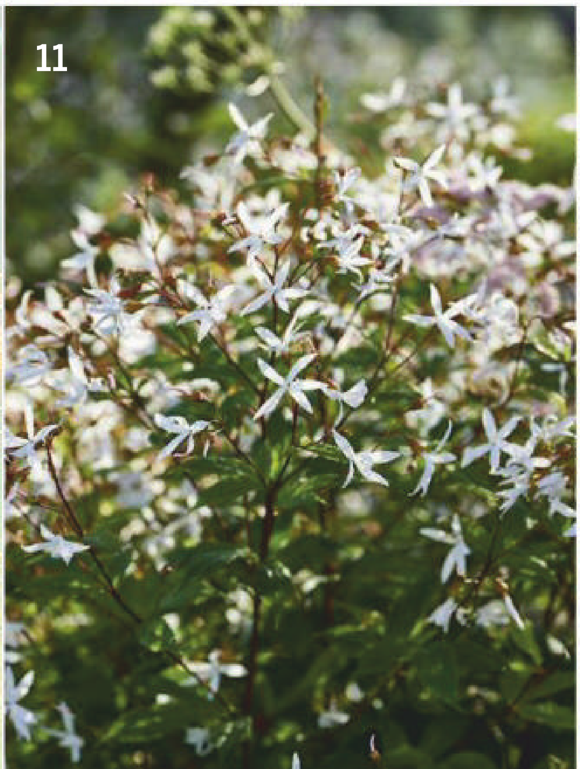
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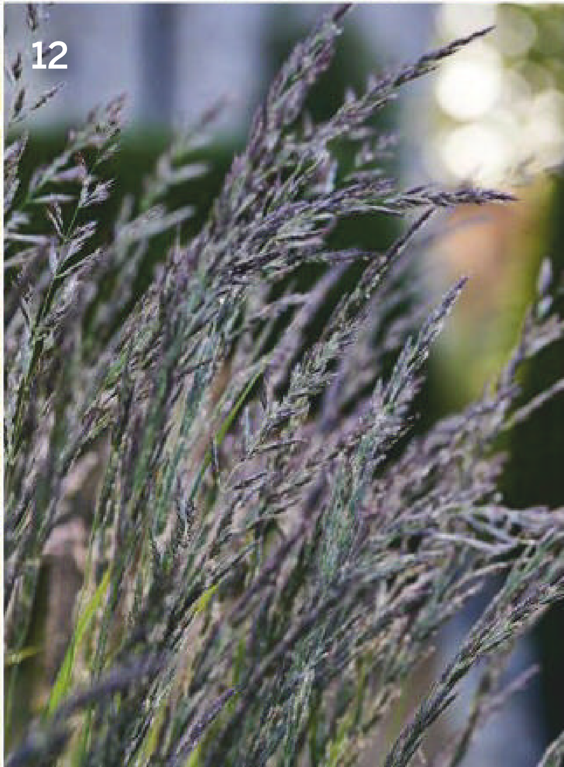
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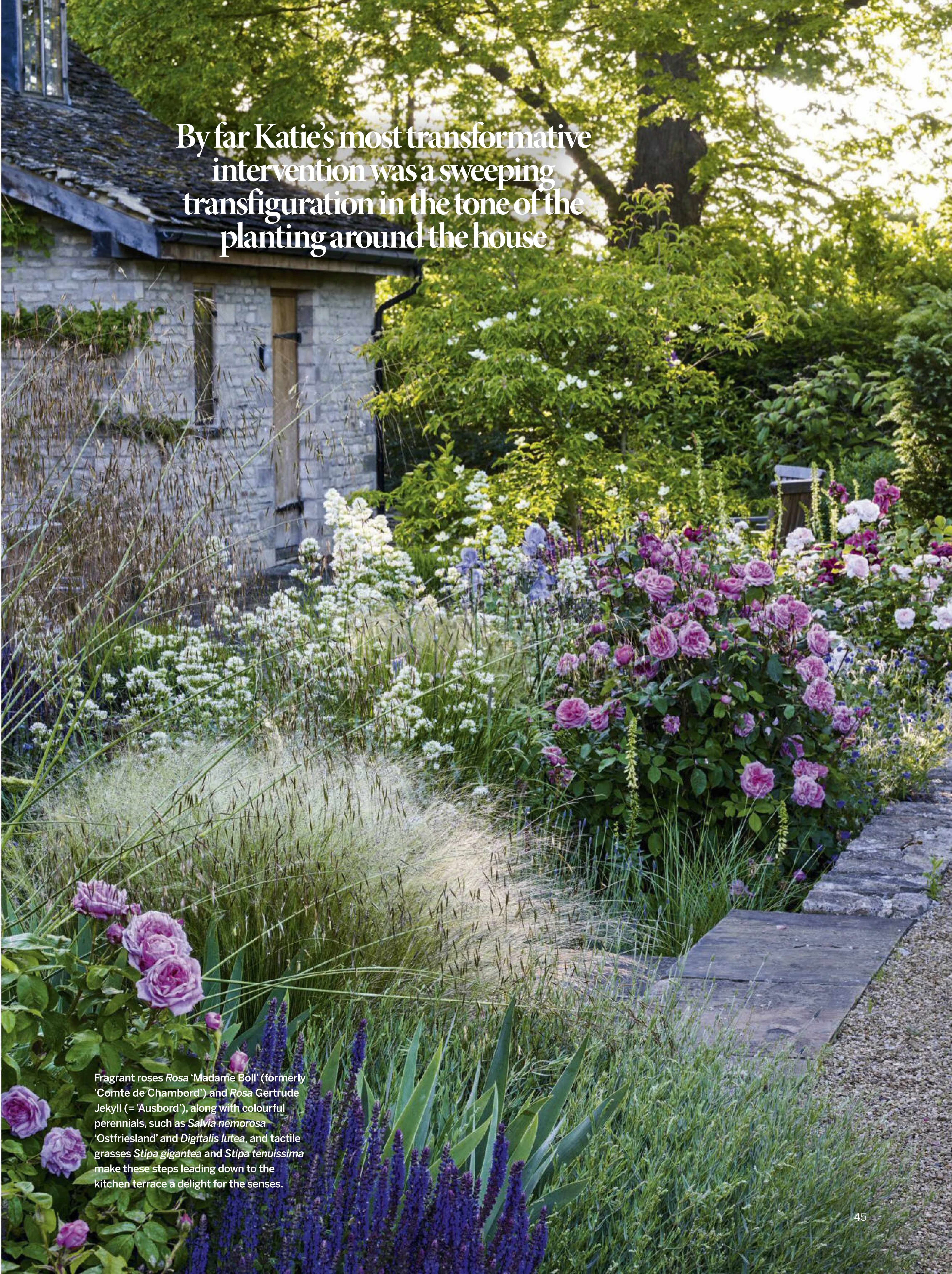
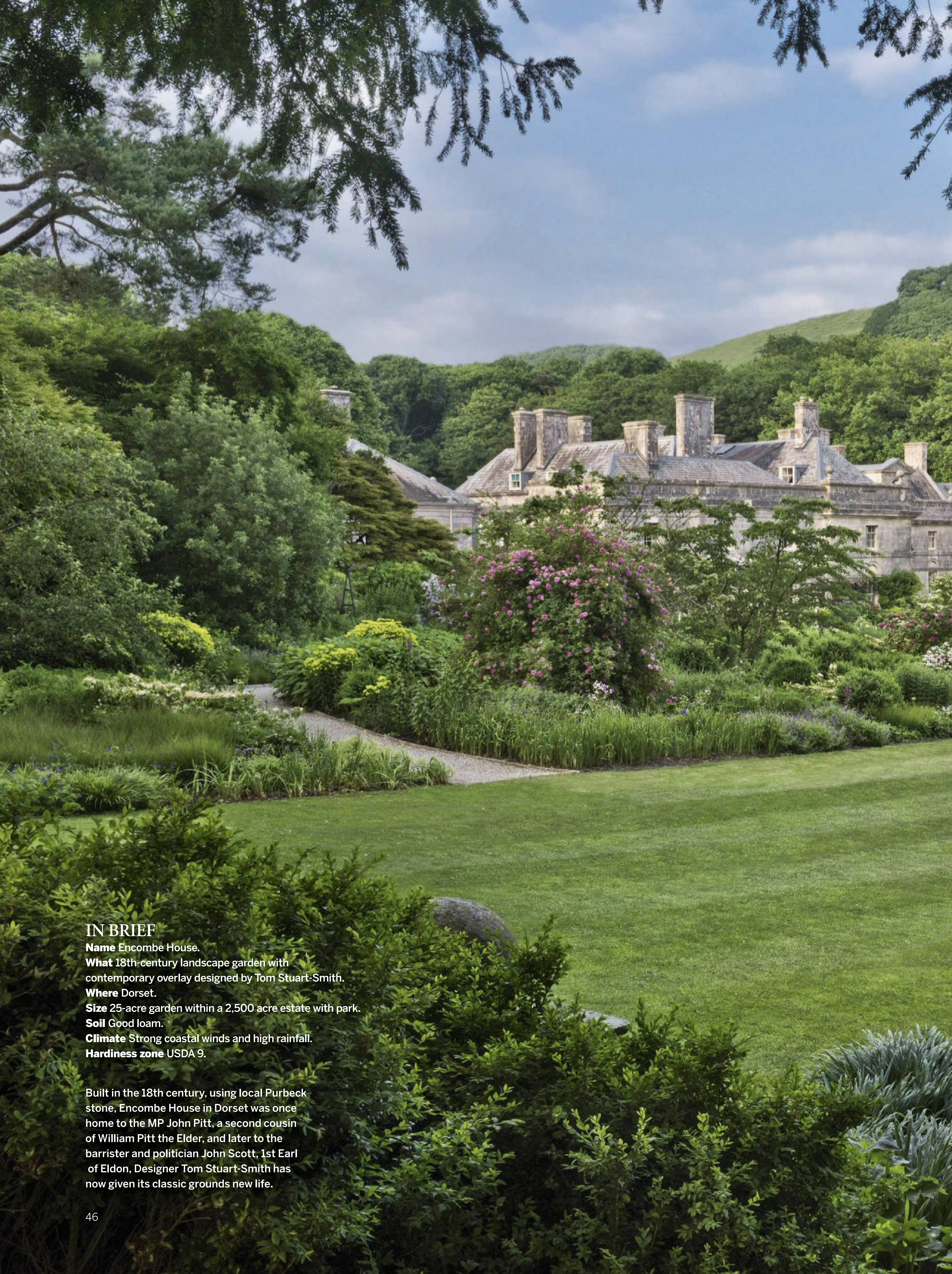


By far Katie's most transformative intervention was a sweeping transfiguration in the tone of the planting around the house

Fragrant roses *Rosa* 'Madame Boll' (formerly 'Comte de Chambord') and *Rosa* Gertrude Jekyll (= 'Ausbord'), along with colourful perennials, such as *Salvia nemorosa* 'Ostfriesland' and *Digitalis lutea*, and tactile grasses *Stipa gigantea* and *Stipa tenuissima* make these steps leading down to the kitchen terrace a delight for the senses.



IN BRIEF

Name Encombe House.
What 18th-century landscape garden with contemporary overlay designed by Tom Stuart-Smith.
Where Dorset.
Size 25-acre garden within a 2,500 acre estate with park.
Soil Good loam.
Climate Strong coastal winds and high rainfall.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Built in the 18th century, using local Purbeck stone, Encombe House in Dorset was once home to the MP John Pitt, a second cousin of William Pitt the Elder, and later to the barrister and politician John Scott, 1st Earl of Eldon, Designer Tom Stuart-Smith has now given its classic grounds new life.

Another world

In his redesign for an 18th-century estate in Dorset, Tom Stuart-Smith has created a magical hidden garden that enhances the estate's timeless appeal

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREA JONES

Tom Stuart-Smith is best known as a designer who creates spectacular set-piece gardens, often occupying walled gardens and other enclosed spaces. But he is also adept at working within an historical context, where his planting style is gauged to the prevailing atmosphere. In such cases, much of his input takes the form of spatial design – that is, in addition to the kind of herbaceous planting design that most experienced designers think of as merely 'the icing on the cake'.

Encombe, in Dorset, is one such project. The 2,500-acre estate is spectacularly sited, sandwiched between the Purbeck Hills and the sea, and approached via an atmospheric entrance drive that weaves its way down through the wooded valley sides. "There have been few places I have ever been to where the arrival has been so emotionally overpowering," Tom says. "Encombe is the nearest thing to entering Narnia." This privileged position gives the estate, according to Tom, "a special quality of separateness, so that you have the impression that you are somewhere quite apart from the rest of the world".

The house and designed landscape we see today was mainly the work of John Pitt, who lived at Encombe from 1735 until 1787. The low-slung, neoclassical mansion looks out across a large lake that appears to meld with the sea beyond, the views framed by strategically placed trees and the enfolding contours of the valley. The estate as a whole has a markedly fluid feel to it, as if it is constantly moving around you – almost like the sea itself.

Tom with his colleague Jem Hanbury were commissioned to work across the whole estate in 2010, and Tom immediately came to appreciate Pitt's vision – the dramatic coast, the vastness of the English Channel, and the bare limestone hills contrasting with the intimacy of the valley. His first decision was to remove a sunken croquet lawn, which occupied the courtyard on the south front of the house, so creating an unnecessary barrier between the house, lake and the sea beyond. Now a sleek terrace of Purbeck stone adds a subtle contemporary note and frames substantial plantings against the house, where roses including 'Aimée Vibert' flourish alongside tough plantings of grapevines, *Melianthus major*, rosemary, eupatorium and *Euphorbia* x *pasteurii*.

One focus of Tom's work was the area around a mid-19th-century classical temple set on rising ground just to the southwest, which is believed to have been designed by George Repton (son of Humphry), who had married one of the daughters of the house. "I felt there was too direct a connection between the temple and the house," Tom explains.

The solution was to introduce new twin shrubberies on either side of the building, containing big plantings of sanguisorbas, persicarias, *Euphorbia* x *pasteurii* and grasses (molinias and hakonechloas) set around cloud-formed box clumps and masses of sarcococca. Old pines, yews and oaks tower above younger plantings of cornus and acers, while in spring *Narcissus* 'Thalia' lights up the grassy banks below the temple. The southern shrubbery, on the side further away from the house, has a slightly darker, moodier feel, where shrubs such as *Viburnum cinnamomifolium* contribute to the atmosphere.

The temple and its shrubberies are a staging post on the short journey towards the walled garden, which is delightfully topsy-turvy, pocketed in among a collection of hills and hummocks. Most of this garden has been planted as an orchard of apple, pear, plum, quince and gage trees, set in a wildflower meadow where masses of camassias and *Gladiolus communis* subsp. *byzantinus* come up in springtime.

But in the middle is a jewel-like paradise garden enclosed by hedges and filled with climbing roses ('Madame Alfred Carrière', 'Cécile Brünner') on metal arches and supports, and adorned by yew obelisks. A quartet of arbours, one at each corner, is festooned with espaliered apple 'Tydeman's Late Orange'. The planting is rich and romantic, with the red tree peony *Paeonia delavayi* used as a link plant amid geraniums, eremurus, gauras, philadelpus, salvias and nepetas. "The enclosed garden in the middle was partly a pragmatic solution," Tom says, "because the walled garden is so huge. But I got fixated on the idea that this was the centre of Encombe, and that Encombe is a world within a world. I began to think of it as being like the Omphalos of Delphi, the stone that was supposed to symbolise the navel of the world, through which we communicate with the gods. It needed a fountainhead." And there is indeed a fountain at the centre, made from an old millwheel found on the estate.

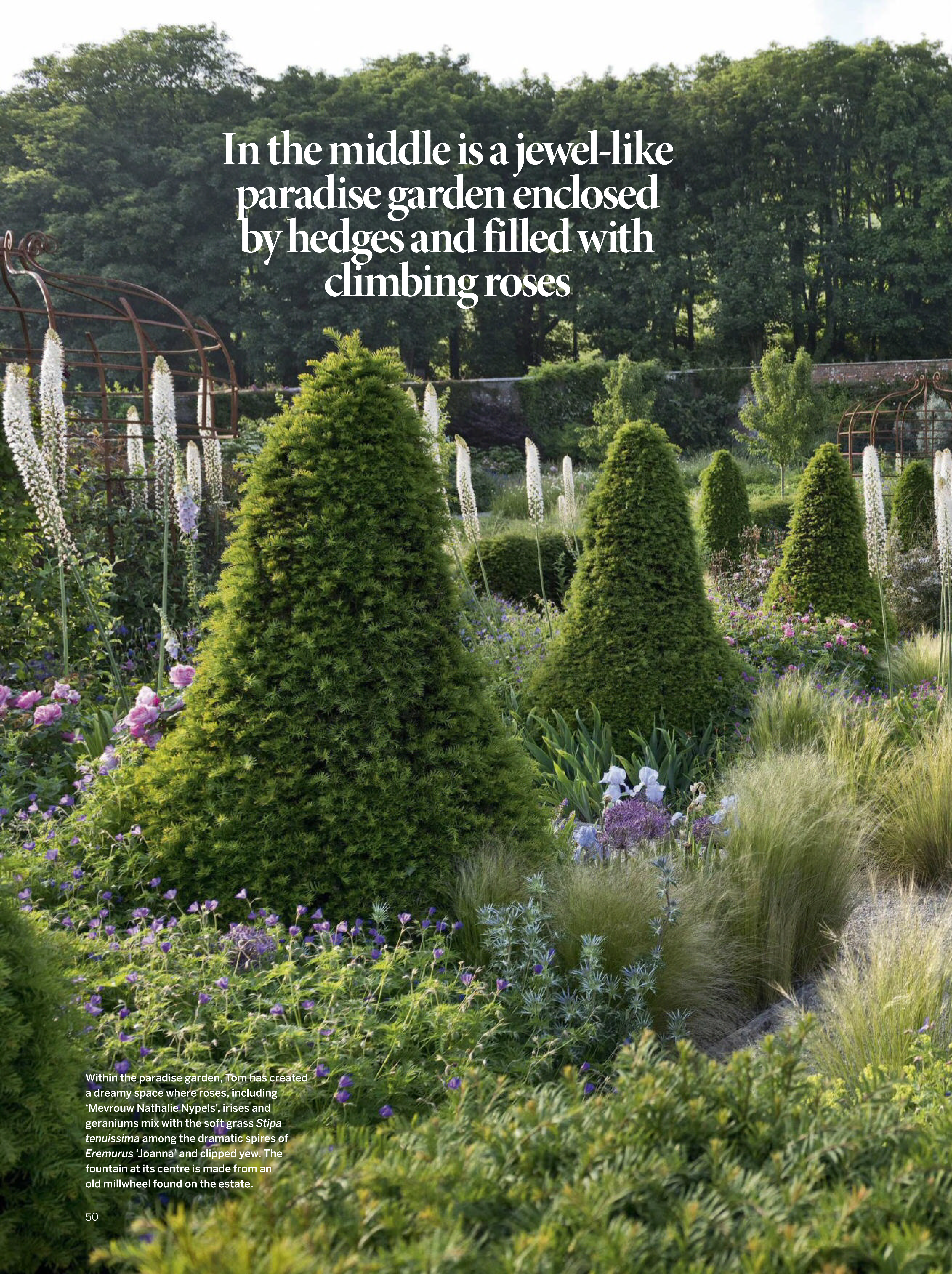
The hedged central space in the centre of Encombe's walled garden is a dreamy space that only adds to the feeling that this estate is a secret realm – caught, somehow, in a timeless suspension. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Tom's work at **tomstuartsmith.co.uk**

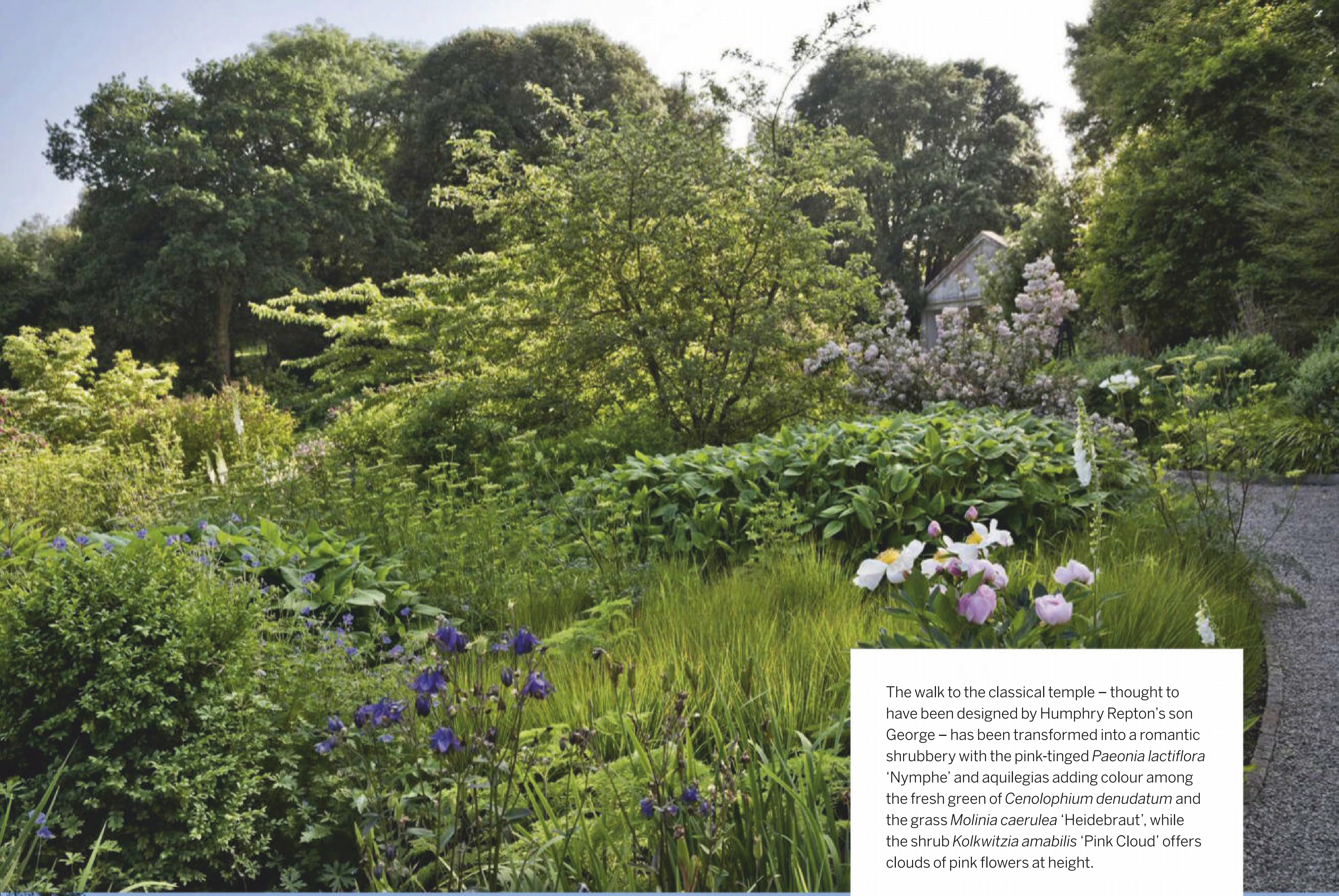
Tom's paradise garden at the centre of Encombe's walled garden is reached via paths mown through swathes of ox-eye daisies, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, dotted with apple, plum and pear trees. The starting point for this garden within a garden was inspired by idea of the Omphalos of Delphi, the stone thrown by Zeus to mark the centre of the world. Enclosed by hedging, it has the feel of a secret garden hiding a small, exotic jewel within the incongruous setting of an English meadow.

I got fixated on the idea that this was the centre of Encombe, and that Encombe is a world within a world

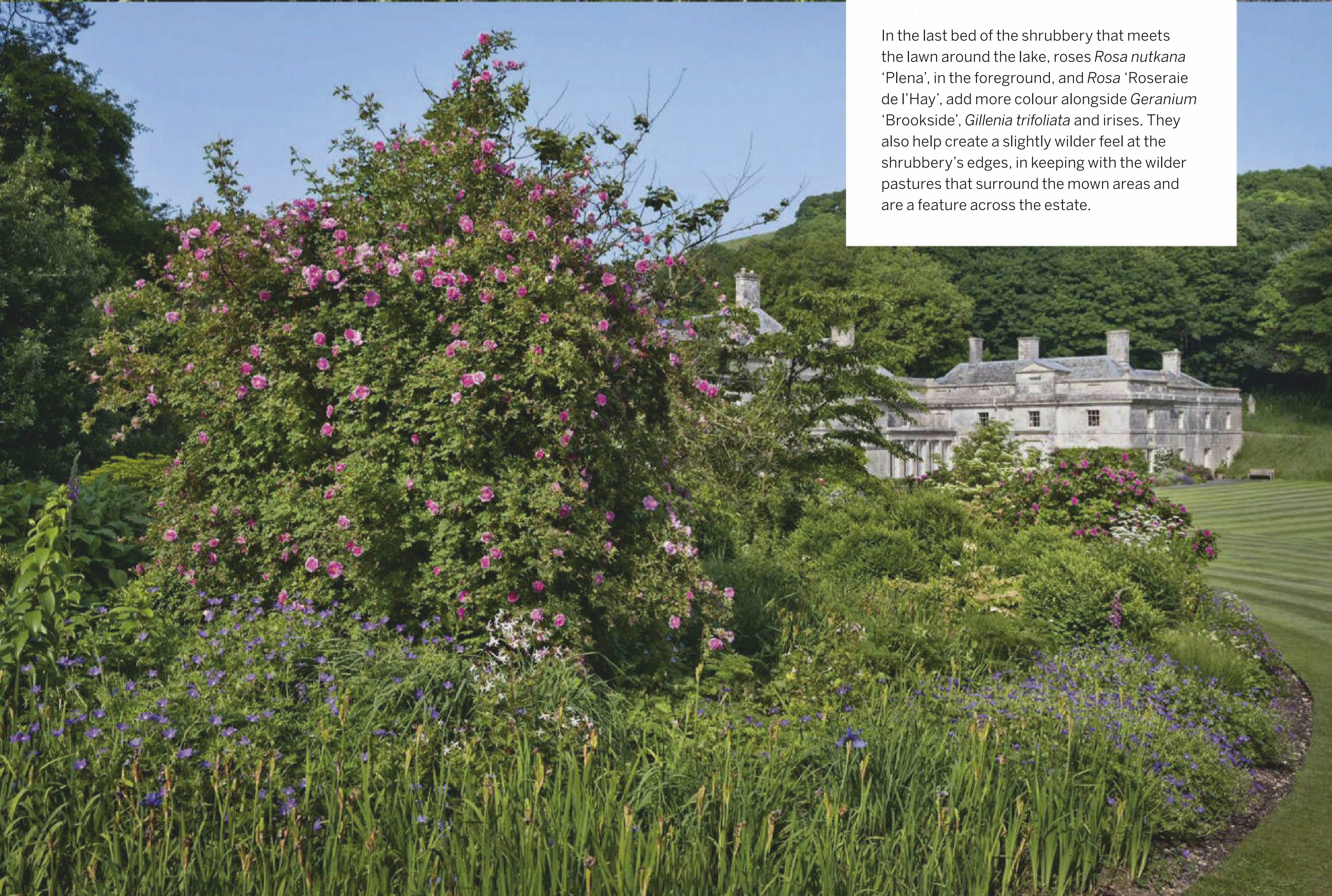


In the middle is a jewel-like paradise garden enclosed by hedges and filled with climbing roses

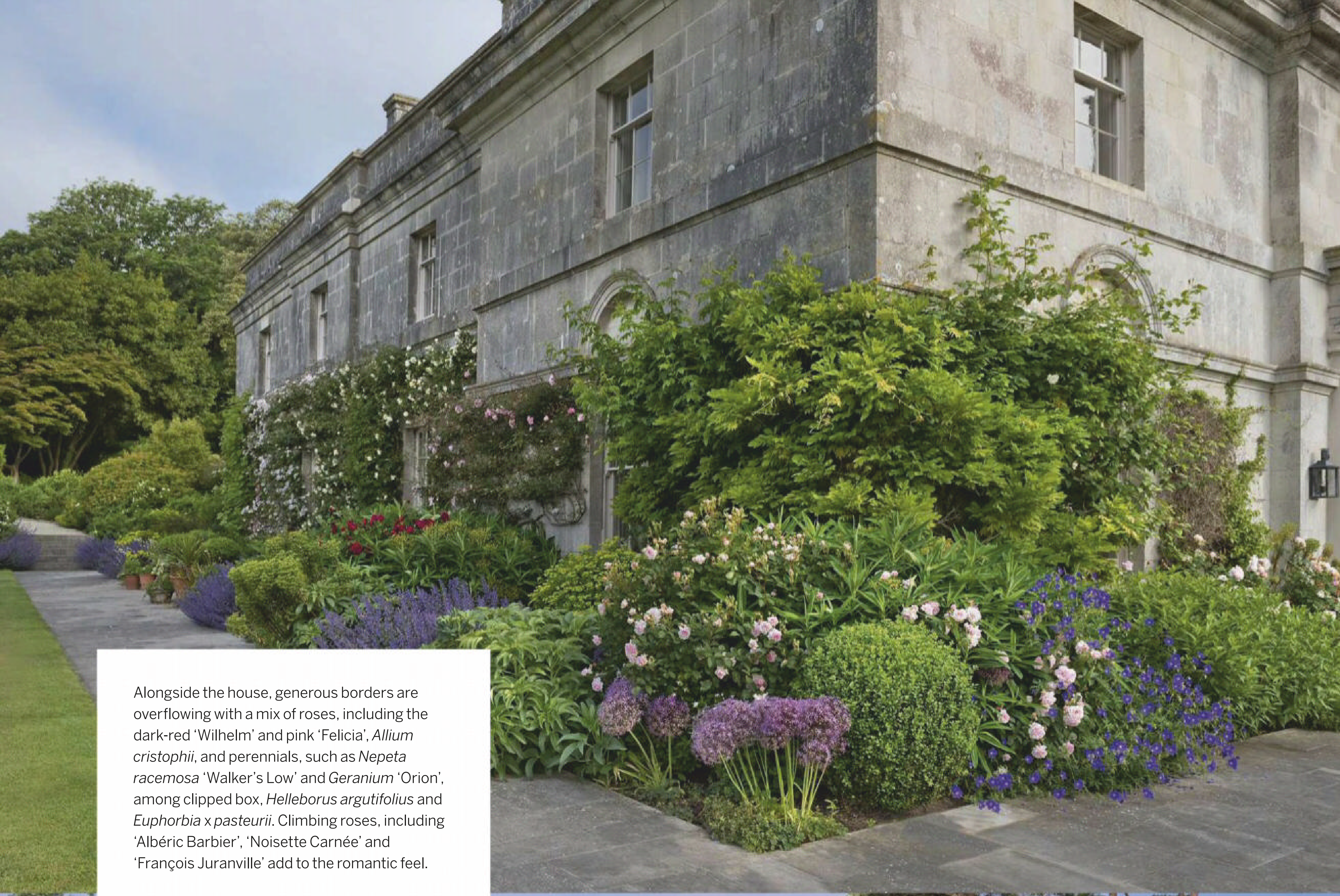
Within the paradise garden, Tom has created a dreamy space where roses, including 'Mevrouw Nathalie Nypels', irises and geraniums mix with the soft grass *Stipa tenuissima* among the dramatic spires of *Eremurus* 'Joanna' and clipped yew. The fountain at its centre is made from an old millwheel found on the estate.



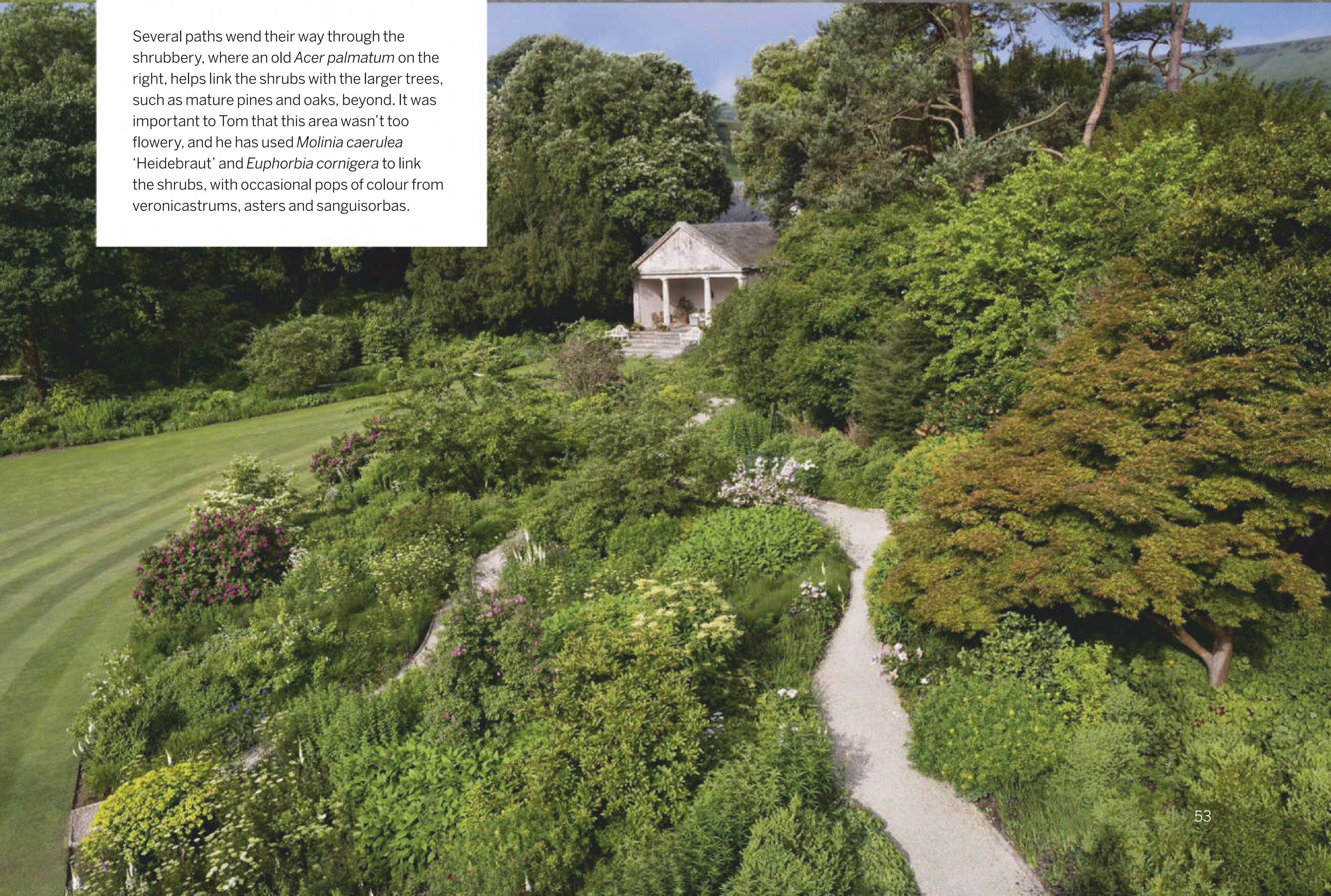
The walk to the classical temple – thought to have been designed by Humphry Repton's son George – has been transformed into a romantic shrubbery with the pink-tinged *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Nymphe' and aquilegias adding colour among the fresh green of *Cenolophium denudatum* and the grass *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidebraut', while the shrub *Kolkwitzia amabilis* 'Pink Cloud' offers clouds of pink flowers at height.



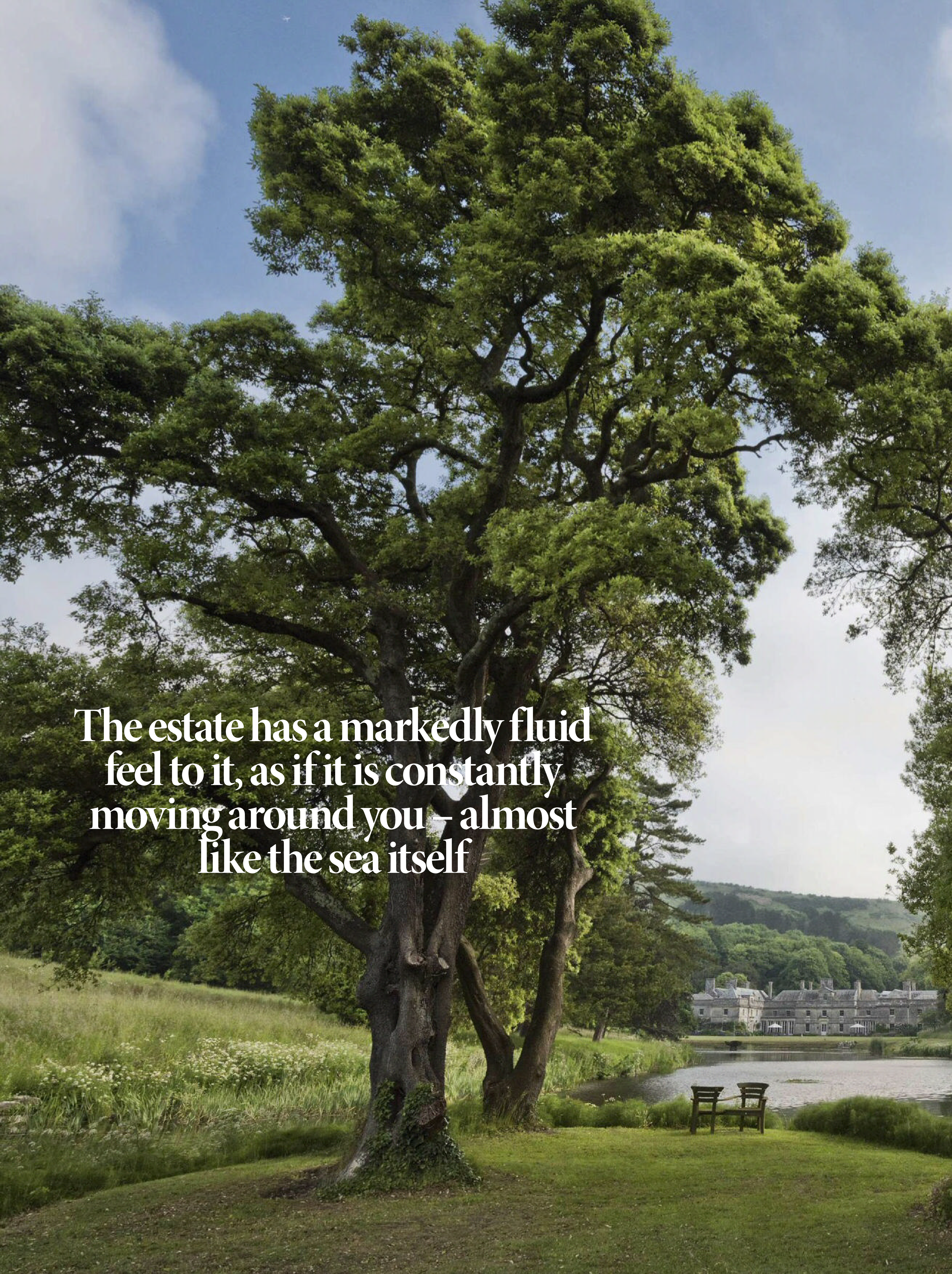
In the last bed of the shrubbery that meets the lawn around the lake, roses *Rosa nutkana* 'Plena', in the foreground, and *Rosa* 'Roseraie de l'Hay', add more colour alongside *Geranium* 'Brookside', *Gillenia trifoliata* and irises. They also help create a slightly wilder feel at the shrubbery's edges, in keeping with the wilder pastures that surround the mown areas and are a feature across the estate.



Alongside the house, generous borders are overflowing with a mix of roses, including the dark-red 'Wilhelm' and pink 'Felicia', *Allium cristophii*, and perennials, such as *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' and *Geranium* 'Orion', among clipped box, *Helleborus argutifolius* and *Euphorbia x pasteurii*. Climbing roses, including 'Albéric Barbier', 'Noisette Carnée' and 'François Juranville' add to the romantic feel.



Several paths wend their way through the shrubbery, where an old *Acer palmatum* on the right, helps link the shrubs with the larger trees, such as mature pines and oaks, beyond. It was important to Tom that this area wasn't too flowery, and he has used *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidebraut' and *Euphorbia cornigera* to link the shrubs, with occasional pops of colour from veronicastrums, asters and sanguisorbas.



The estate has a markedly fluid feel to it, as if it is constantly moving around you – almost like the sea itself

A stand of high-pruned *Quercus ilex* is carefully managed so as to frame views in both directions, and creates a timeless view of the house that could quite easily have come from a Gainsborough landscape.

VERBENA

From the familiar, tall and willowy Verbena bonariensis *to the compact* Verbena rigida, *this group of herbaceous perennials offers gardeners plenty of long-flowering options*

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER

Verena bonariensis
Tall and structural, it is the archetypal see-through plant to frame other subjects behind it. Hummingbirds, hawk moths and brimstone butterflies are particularly attracted to the massed, lilac-purple flowerheads. 1.5m. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 7a-11†.

JASON INGRAM

A long season of interest, ease of cultivation and usefulness to pollinating insects and other beneficial wildlife are all qualities I look for when selecting plants for the garden. The genus *Verbena* ticks all the boxes. There are about 250 species of annuals and perennials, with the majority of species and cultivars grown ornamentally derived from the Americas with *Verbena bonariensis* probably the most familiar to gardeners.

Characteristics of this genus include square stems usually with opposite toothed leaves all covered in coarse hairs that make them slightly abrasive to the skin when handled. They have clusters of small tubular flowers that are sweetly scented, attracting butterflies and moths as their main pollinators, and have tiny nutlet-like seeds. They vary significantly in height from 20cm in *V. rigida* to 2m or more in *V. hastata*. There are about 20 species and cultivars currently available in the UK.

Hardiness is variable depending on the origin of the species. Those from South America are less hardy then those from North America. *V. bonariensis* was considered to be half-hardy or tender and often used as an annual but with climate change, many gardeners find it to be totally perennial in their gardens. My site is in a frost pocket, on clay with a high rainfall and I cannot keep it alive overwinter, not so much from cold but damp and dank conditions. Nearby, neighbours on chalky soils say that it self-seeds almost too readily. It is a stately plant some 1.5m tall with narrow, rigid stems and widely spaced branches with few leaves, allowing the viewer to see through it, so it can be planted near the front of a border without obscuring the planting beyond.

V. rigida is native to Argentina and southern Brazil, it is less hardy than *V. bonariensis* but usually perennial in sharply drained soils. Stiffly upright to 20-40cm with rough, clasping toothed leaves and topped with clusters of intense lilac-purple flowers. *V. rigida* 'Santos' is a seed strain with vivid purple flowers and *V. rigida* f. *lilacina* 'Polaris' has cool, globular flowerheads of icy pale lilac. As I struggle to overwinter the South American species, I grow hardy North American types. *V. hastata* has skinny, rigid stems to 1.5m with narrow, candelabra-like flower spikes rather than globular heads. It is a magnet for pollinators with small bluish-purple flowers. *V. hastata* f. *rosea* and *V. hastata* f. *albiflora* are pink and white forms. They can seed prodigiously and in richer soils may need staking. *V. stricta*, is known as hoary vervain as its stems and leaves are covered with fine white hairs and spikes of intense lavender flowers.

V. macdougalii originates from Texas to Arizona and on sowing a batch of seed, I noticed one that looked different from the rest. It grew to 1.5-2m with long, spikes of purplish-blue flowers. Decidedly not *V. macdougalii*, which has a thicker stem and is much shorter, this plant flowered from May to October. It appears to be a sterile hybrid, possibly a cross between *V. macdougalii* and *V. hastata*, which still produces nectar and is attractive to pollinators but flowers for many months longer than *V. hastata* as it does not produce seed. I named it *V. macdougalii* 'Lavender Spires' and it has proved to be a long-lived and extremely hardy perennial.

V. officinalis var. *grandiflora* 'Bampton' is a seed strain that originated in the eponymous Devon village and gradually seeded itself through the neighbourhood. It has small rosy-purple flowers, with deep-purple infused foliage and stems, flowering throughout summer.

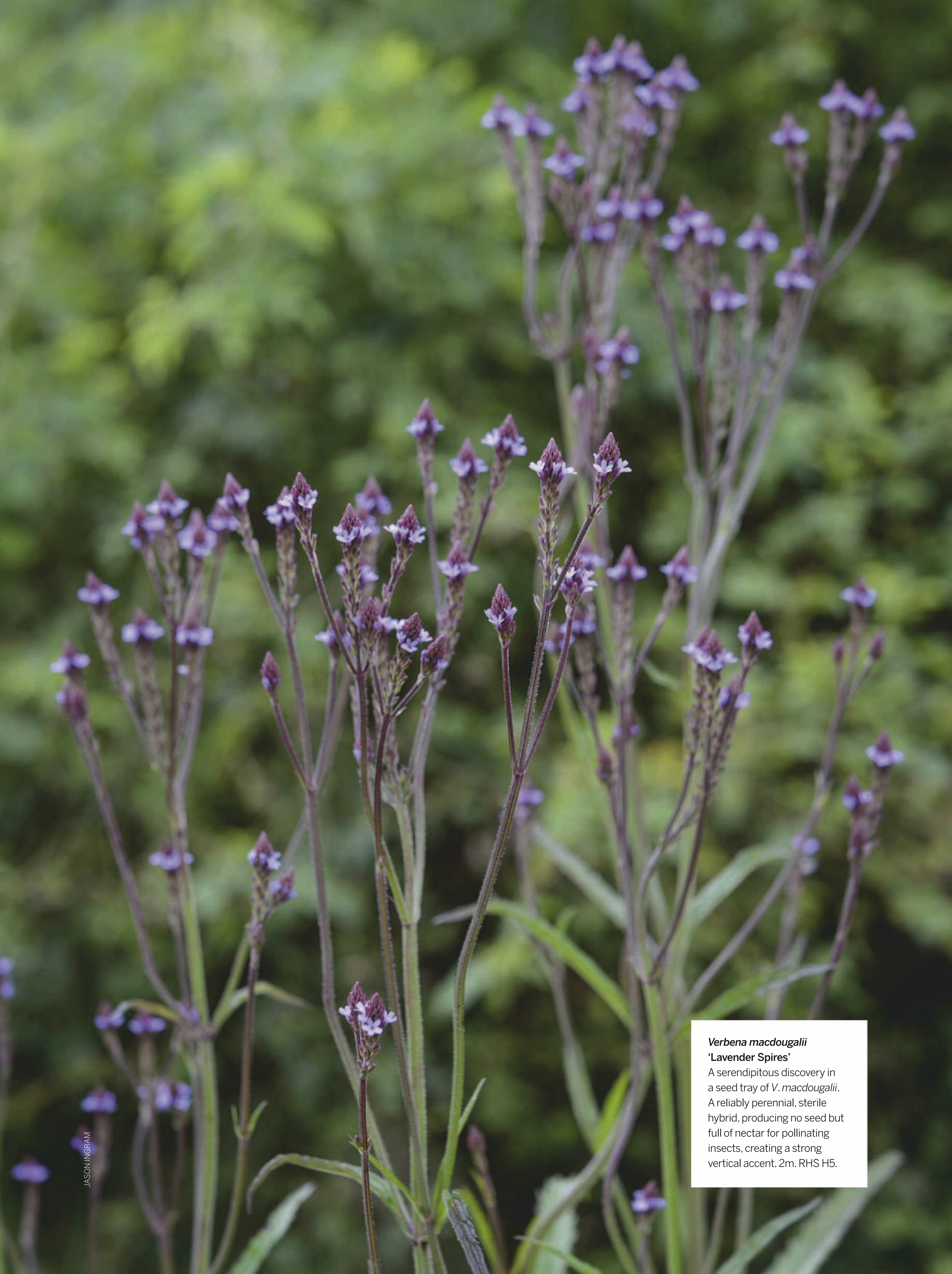
Vervains flower for several months with nectar for a large variety of pollinators and although not the most showy of perennials, their floriferousness makes up for this. The taller species and cultivars make excellent partners in naturalistic plantings, seldom need staking and can be used in drifts to unite a design. The shorter ones make great container plants and front of border subjects and the range of flower shape, size and habit make them worthy subjects for many planting schemes. ❑

• Marina Christopher is a nurserywoman who runs Phoenix Perennial Plants.
Her recommendations for the best verbenas can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

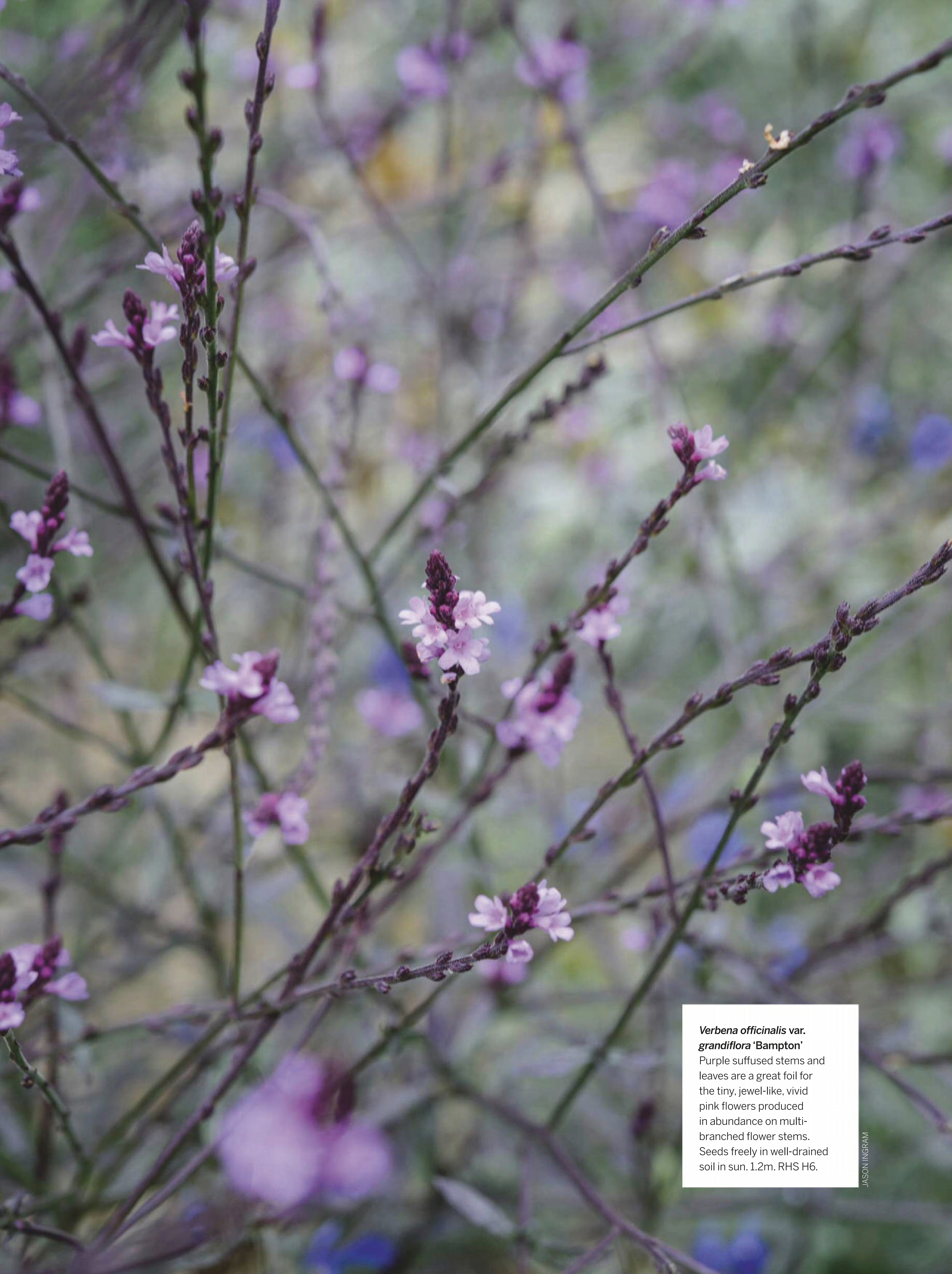
What Half-hardy to hardy herbaceous perennials, sometimes short-lived but very floriferous over several months. Commonly known as vervain or simpler's joy. Some species formerly called verbenas now form part of the closely related genus *Glandularia*, which consists mainly of trailing plants with globular inflorescences.
Origins South and North America and Europe.
Season Flowering season from May to October.
Size 20cm to 2m.
Conditions Require sharply drained soils in full sun.
Hardiness Hardiness varies depending on species with RHS hardiness ratings of between H3 and H7 (hardy to temperatures from -5°C to -20°C), and suitable for gardens in USDA zones 3a to 11, again depending on species.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



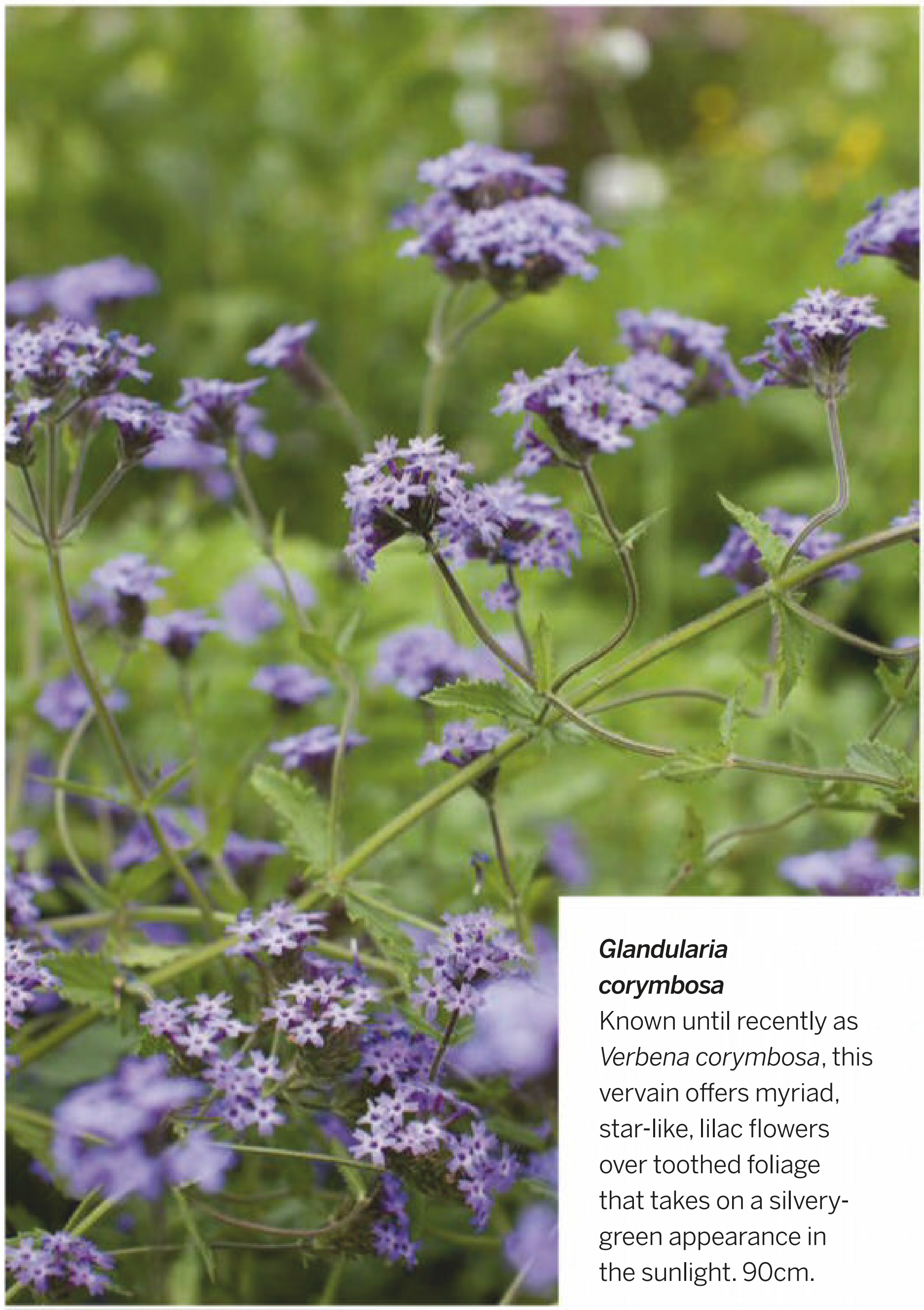
JASON INGRAM

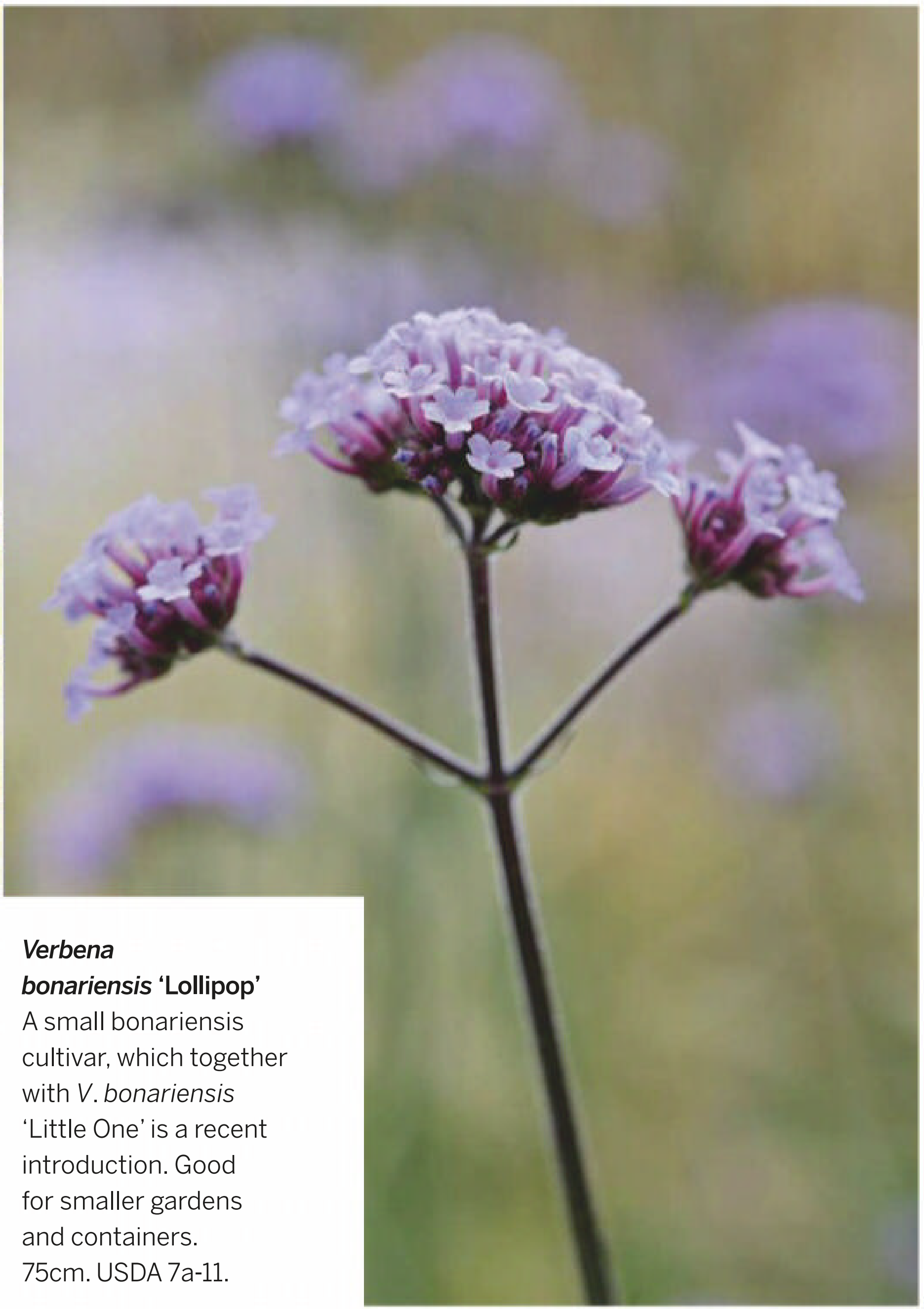
***Verbena macdougalii* 'Lavender Spires'**
A serendipitous discovery in a seed tray of *V. macdougalii*. A reliably perennial, sterile hybrid, producing no seed but full of nectar for pollinating insects, creating a strong vertical accent. 2m. RHS H5.



***Verbena officinalis* var. *grandiflora* 'Bampton'**
Purple suffused stems and leaves are a great foil for the tiny, jewel-like, vivid pink flowers produced in abundance on multi-branched flower stems. Seeds freely in well-drained soil in sun. 1.2m. RHS H6.

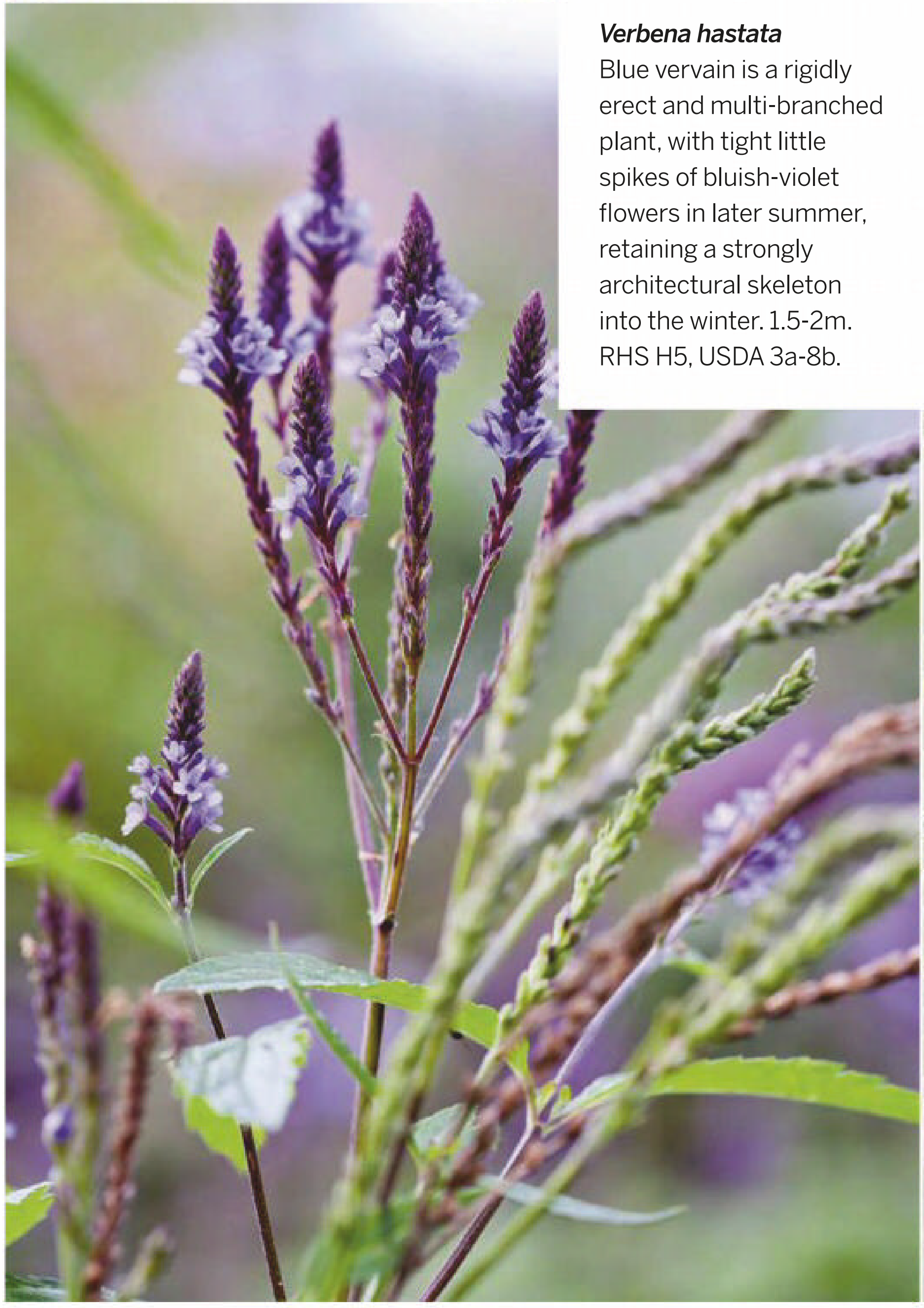
JASON INGRAM

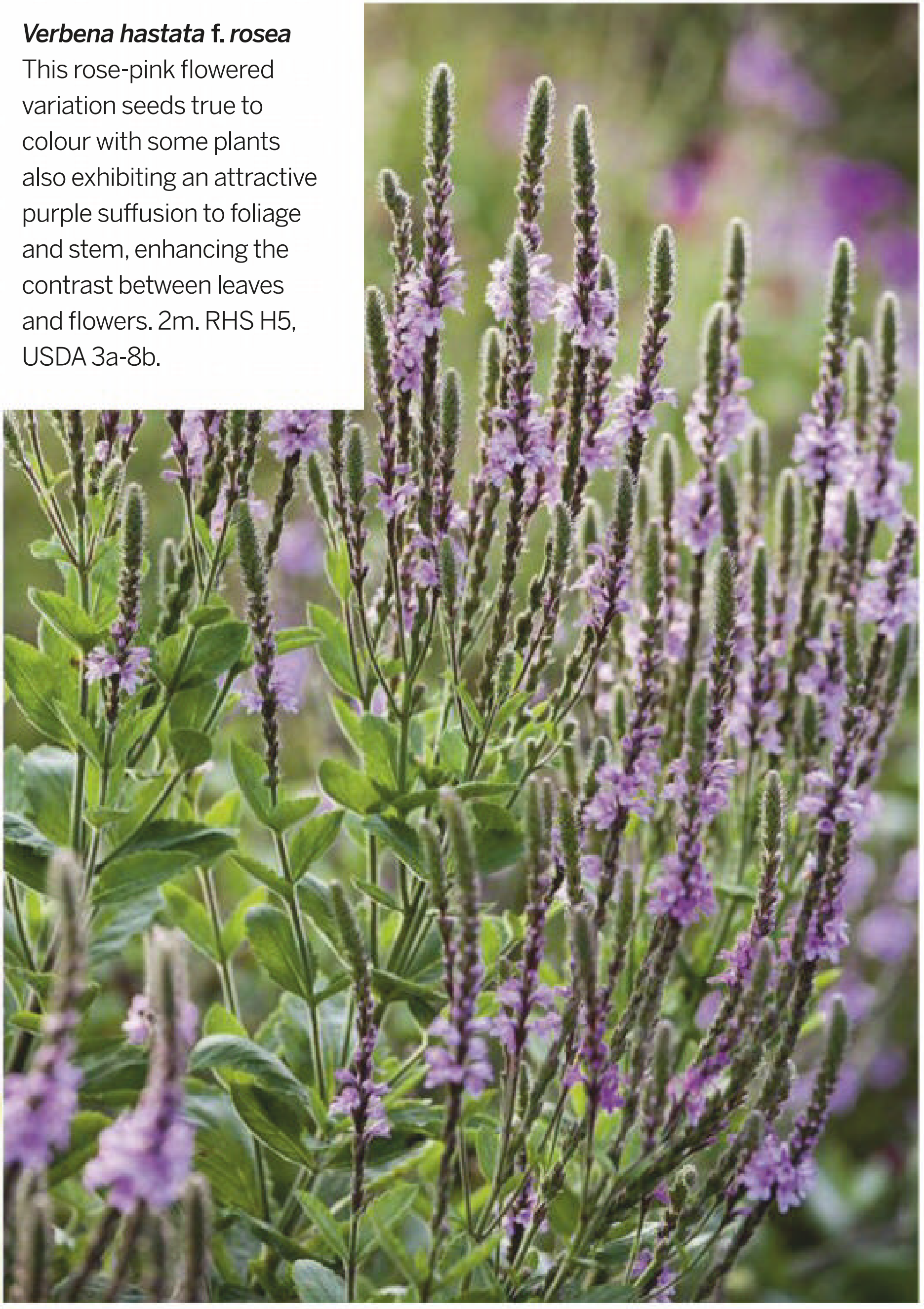




Glandularia corymbosa
Known until recently as *Verbena corymbosa*, this vervain offers myriad, star-like, lilac flowers over toothed foliage that takes on a silvery-green appearance in the sunlight. 90cm.

***Verbena bonariensis* 'Lollipop'**
A small bonariensis cultivar, which together with *V. bonariensis* 'Little One' is a recent introduction. Good for smaller gardens and containers. 75cm. USDA 7a-11.

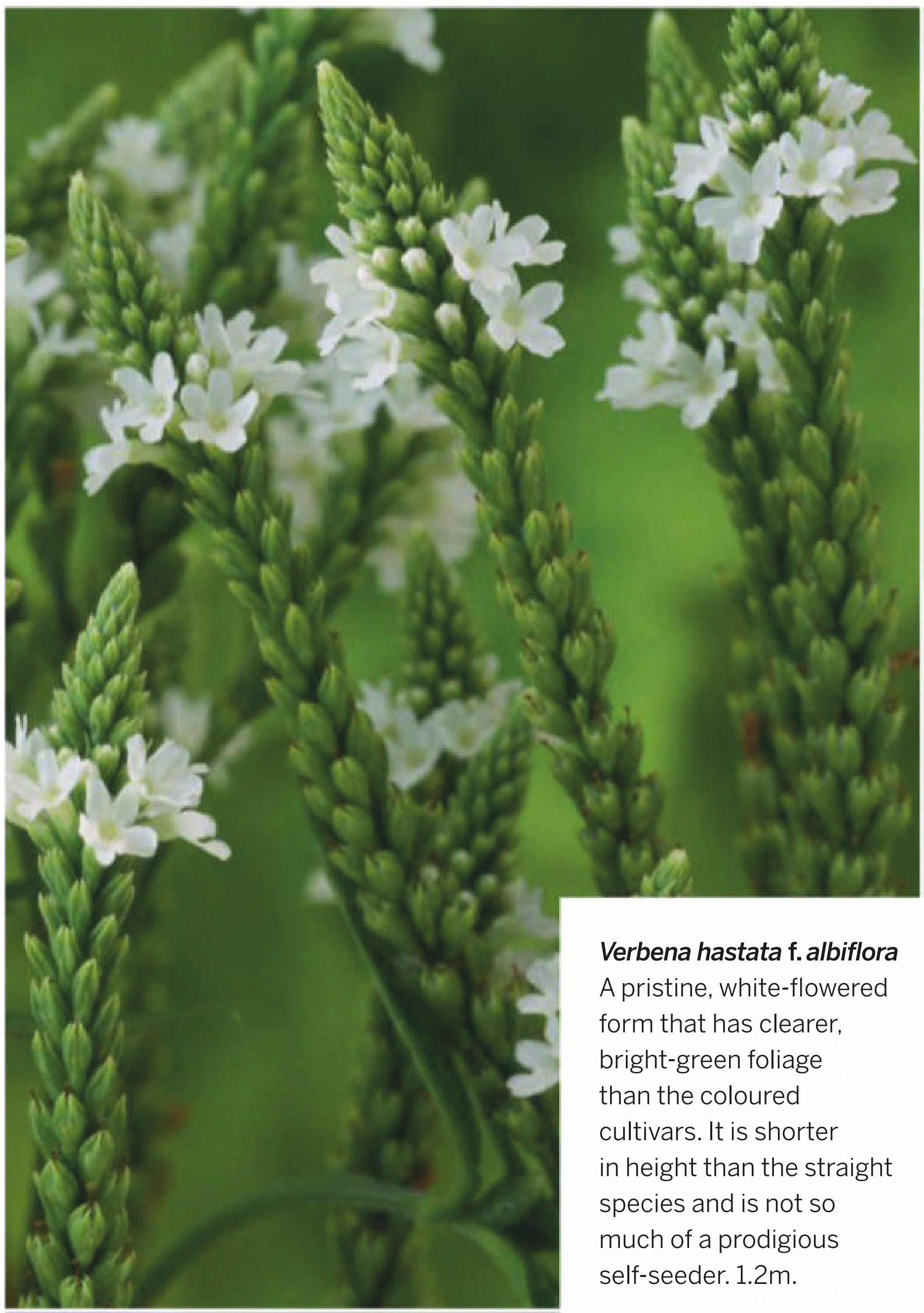


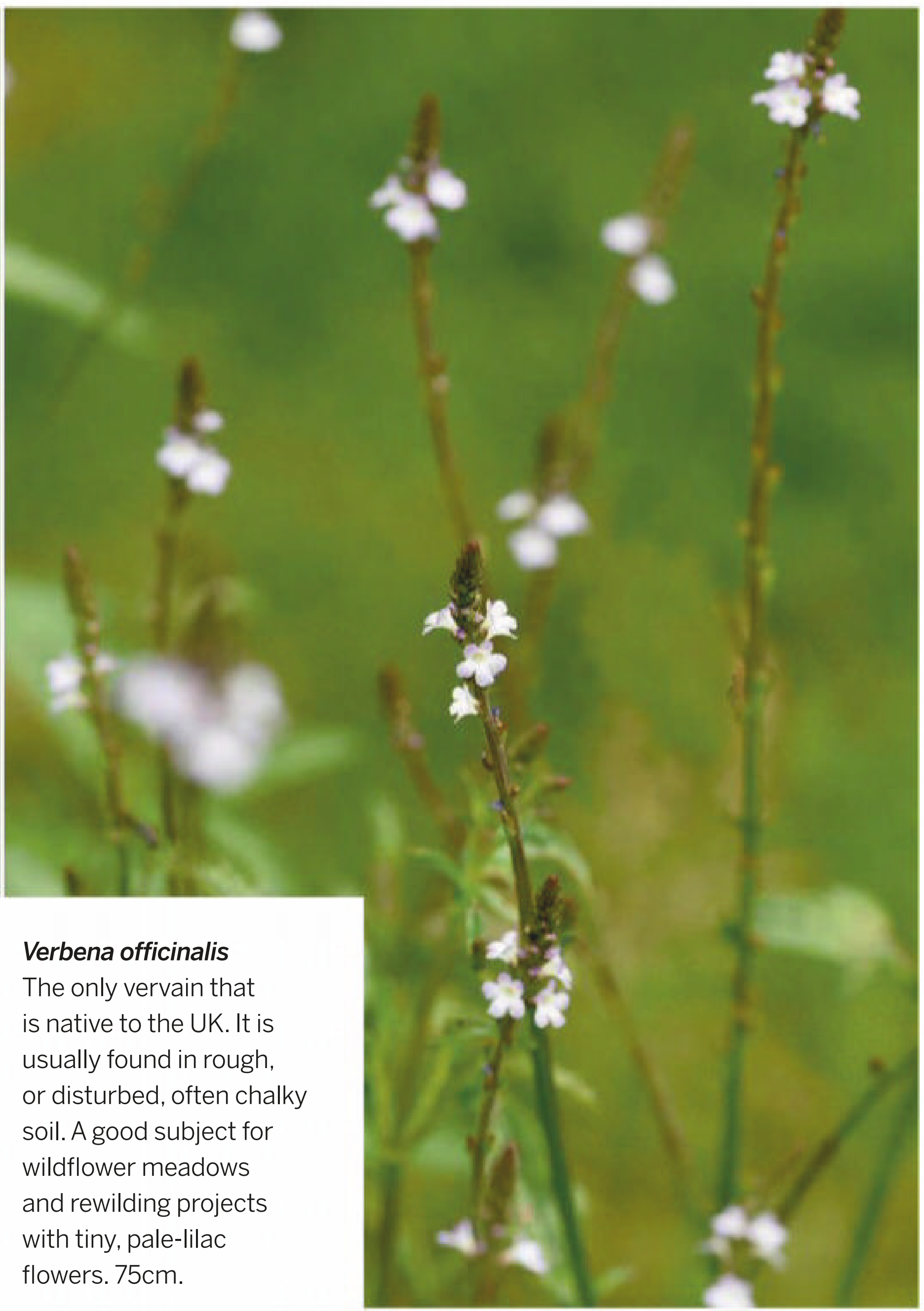


Verbena hastata
Blue vervain is a rigidly erect and multi-branched plant, with tight little spikes of bluish-violet flowers in later summer, retaining a strongly architectural skeleton into the winter. 1.5-2m. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

Verbena hastata* f. *rosea
This rose-pink flowered variation seeds true to colour with some plants also exhibiting an attractive purple suffusion to foliage and stem, enhancing the contrast between leaves and flowers. 2m. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PERNILLA BERGDAHL/GAP PHOTOS; JASON INGRAM; BOTTOM ROW BOTH ROBERT MABIC/GAP PHOTOS



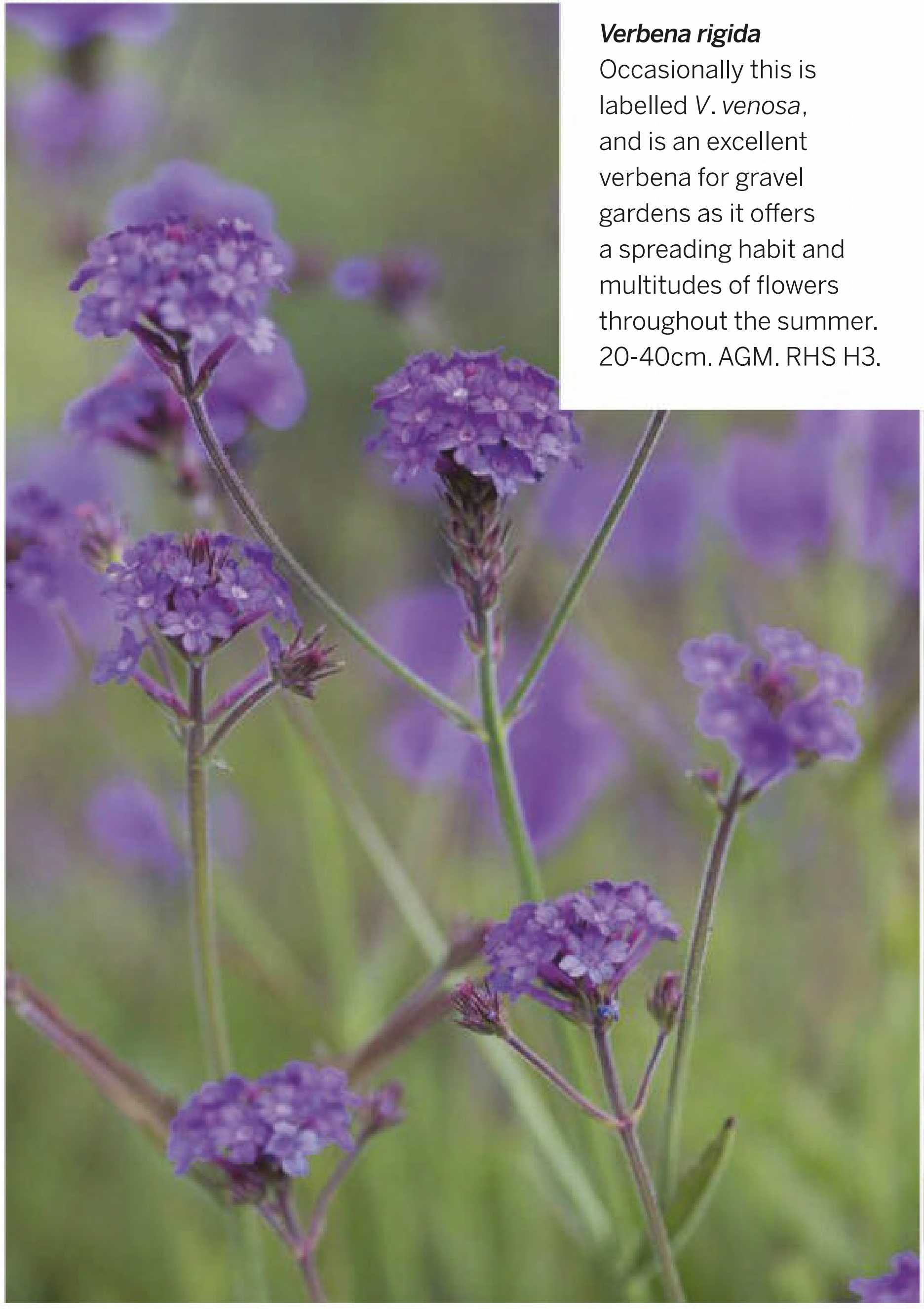


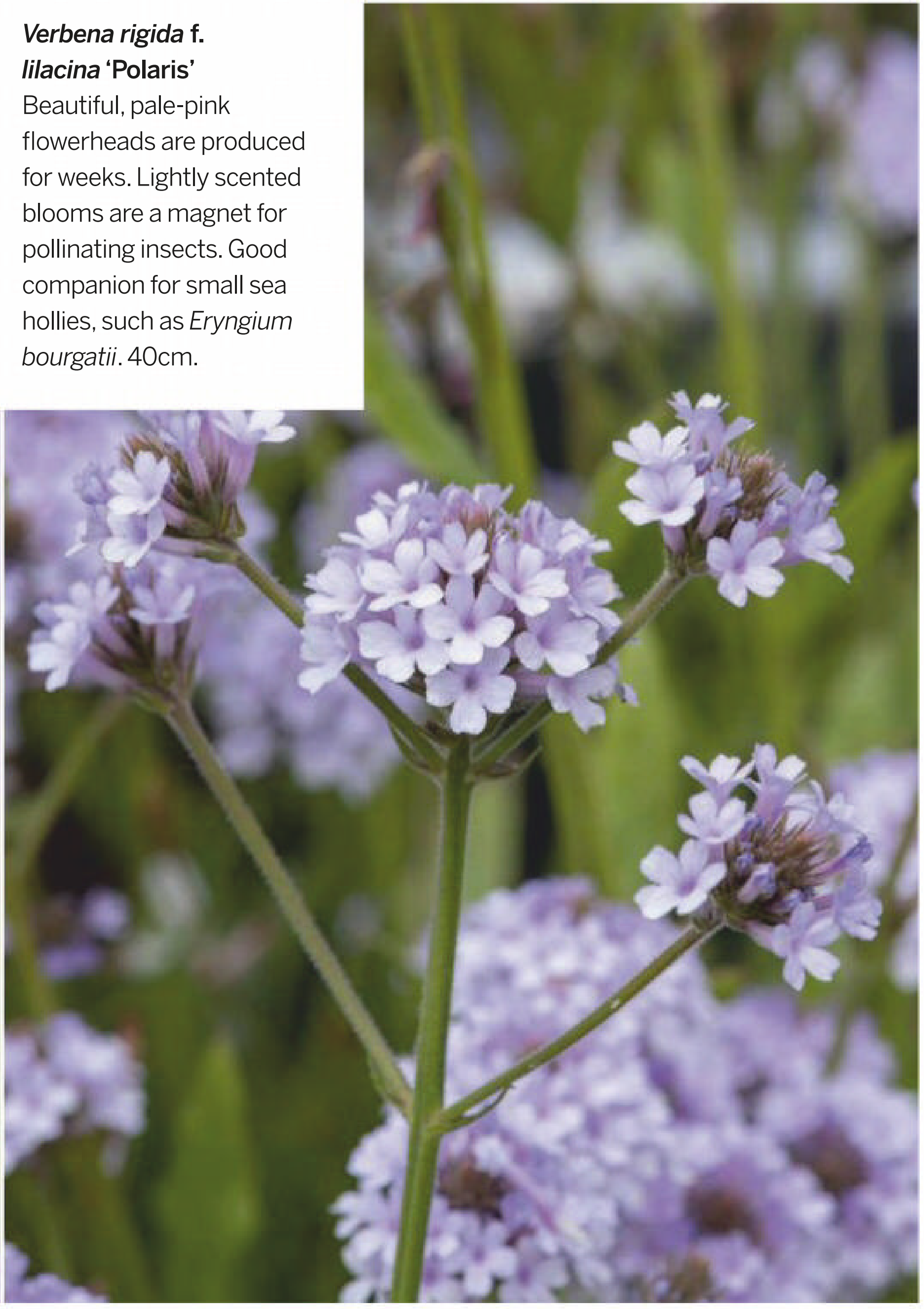
Verbena hastata f. _albiflora_
A pristine, white-flowered form that has clearer, bright-green foliage than the coloured cultivars. It is shorter in height than the straight species and is not so much of a prodigious self-seeder. 1.2m.

Verbena officinalis
The only vervain that is native to the UK. It is usually found in rough, or disturbed, often chalky soil. A good subject for wildflower meadows and rewilding projects with tiny, pale-lilac flowers. 75cm.

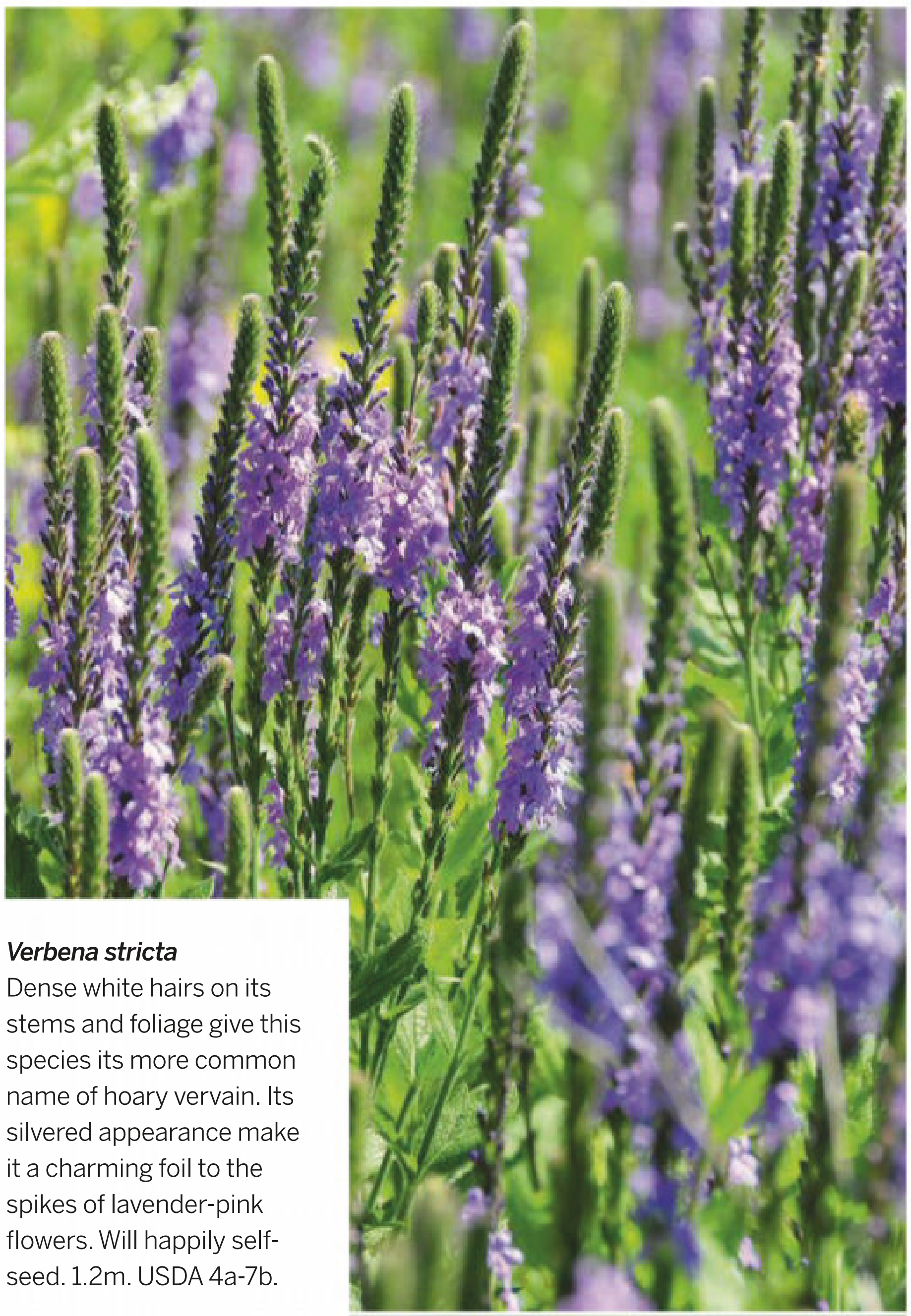
Verbena rigida
Occasionally this is labelled *V. venosa*, and is an excellent verbena for gravel gardens as it offers a spreading habit and multitudes of flowers throughout the summer. 20-40cm. AGM. RHS H3.

Verbena rigida f. _lilacina_ 'Polaris'
Beautiful, pale-pink flowerheads are produced for weeks. Lightly scented blooms are a magnet for pollinating insects. Good companion for small sea hollies, such as *Eryngium bourgatii*. 40cm.

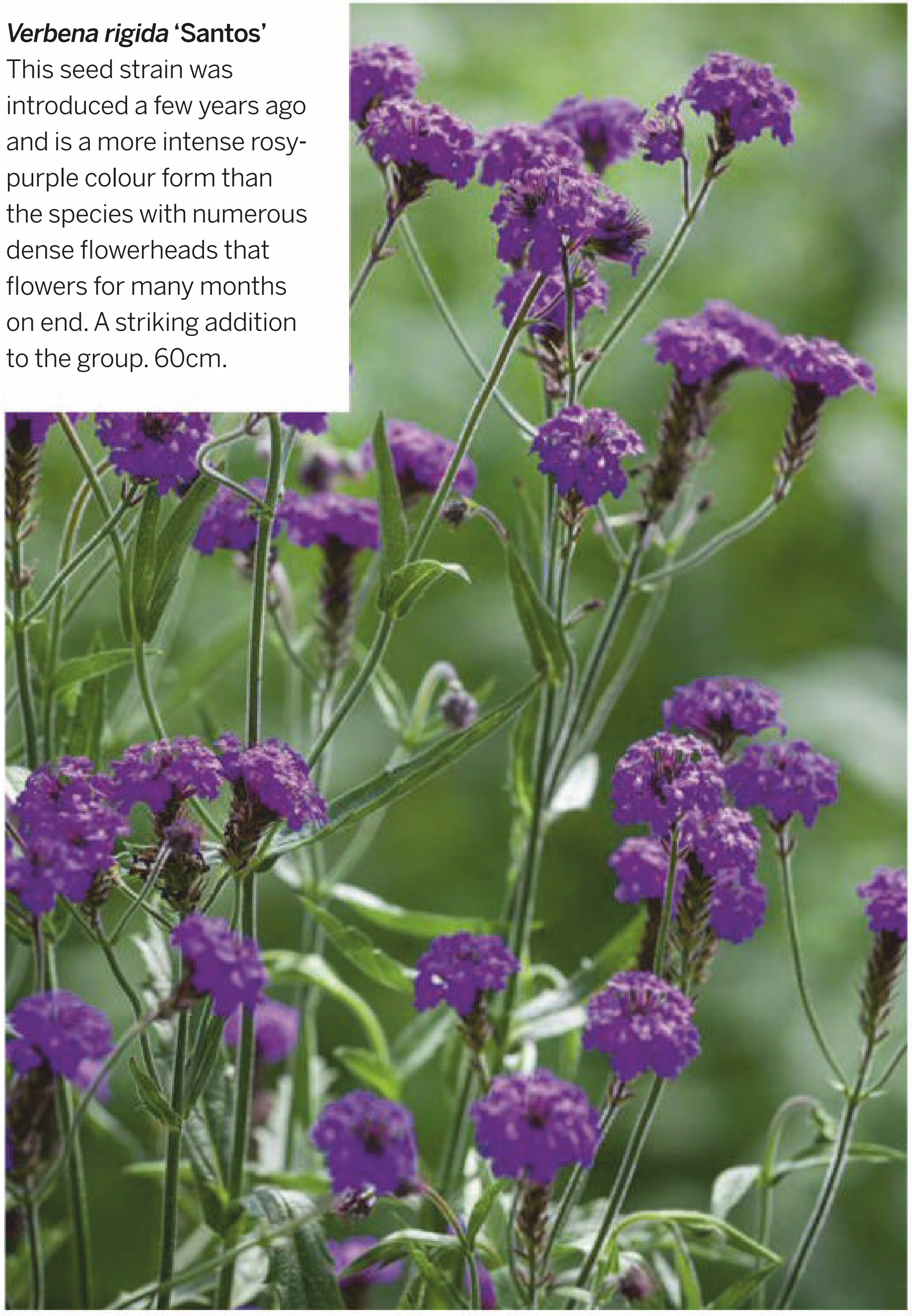




CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHRISTOPHER BURROWS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; MANFRED RUCKSZIO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; GAP PHOTOS; TIM GAINEY/GAP PHOTOS



Verbena stricta
Dense white hairs on its stems and foliage give this species its more common name of hoary vervain. Its silvered appearance make it a charming foil to the spikes of lavender-pink flowers. Will happily self-seed. 1.2m. USDA 4a-7b.



***Verbena rigida* 'Santos'**
This seed strain was introduced a few years ago and is a more intense rosy-purple colour form than the species with numerous dense flowerheads that flowers for many months on end. A striking addition to the group. 60cm.

TOP IMAGE BY NATURE AND SCIENCE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; BOTTOM IMAGE BY JONATHAN BUCKLEY/GAP PHOTOS

Cultivation

The South American species and cultivars thrive best in moisture-retentive, free-draining soils in full sun. They work well in gravel gardens and will seed with abandon on a pea-shingle drive or path. Young seedlings are easy to weed out to allow remaining plants to have the space to grow well without too much competition. *V. rigida* and its cultivars die down at the end of the growing season and reappear in spring through spreading underground rhizomes. Colonies can be kept in check easily by lifting these shallow-rooted subterranean stems, which can be used to propagate plants or composted.

V. bonariensis is best cut down by two thirds at the end of the season to prevent wind rock and in the spring cut down further to a pair of strong shoots near the base of the plant. This will ensure good sturdy growth and the removal of apical tips around mid-May will encourage further branching, slightly shorter growth and more flowers through the season. Alternatively, use one of the shorter cultivars, such as 'Lollipop' or 'Little One', which are 75cm and 60cm in height respectively, although to my mind they lose some of the grace and elegance of the species.

The hardier North American species will tolerate a much wider range of conditions and are perfectly happy in most borders as long as they are not waterlogged in winter. In spring they are best cut down to strong basal shoots but the silhouettes can look effective throughout the winter, rimmed with hoar frost or decorated with spider's webs in the autumn. The seedheads provide shelter and food for many insects and seed for birds.

This genus has few problems, the only one that I have occasionally seen is powdery mildew in very dry seasons. If observed in its infancy, a seaweed feed will usually cure it. All verbenas propagate easily from cuttings and most of them from seed with the exception of the hybrid *V. macdougalii* 'Lavender Spires', which is sterile.

Perfect partners

Verbenas are easy to combine with other herbaceous perennials. Taller species and cultivars provide good vertical accents, which persist as interesting skeletal remains through autumn and winter. They intermingle well in naturalistic plantings and self-seeders often place themselves in desirable positions unifying an herbaceous border. More diminutive spreading species, such as *V. rigida*, interweave among smaller annuals and perennials producing a colourful matrix attractive to humans and insects alike. The colour range in this genus from white, through lilac, pink and purple is optimal for pollinating insects, which perceive ultraviolet, blue and green but do not see red.

Where to see and buy

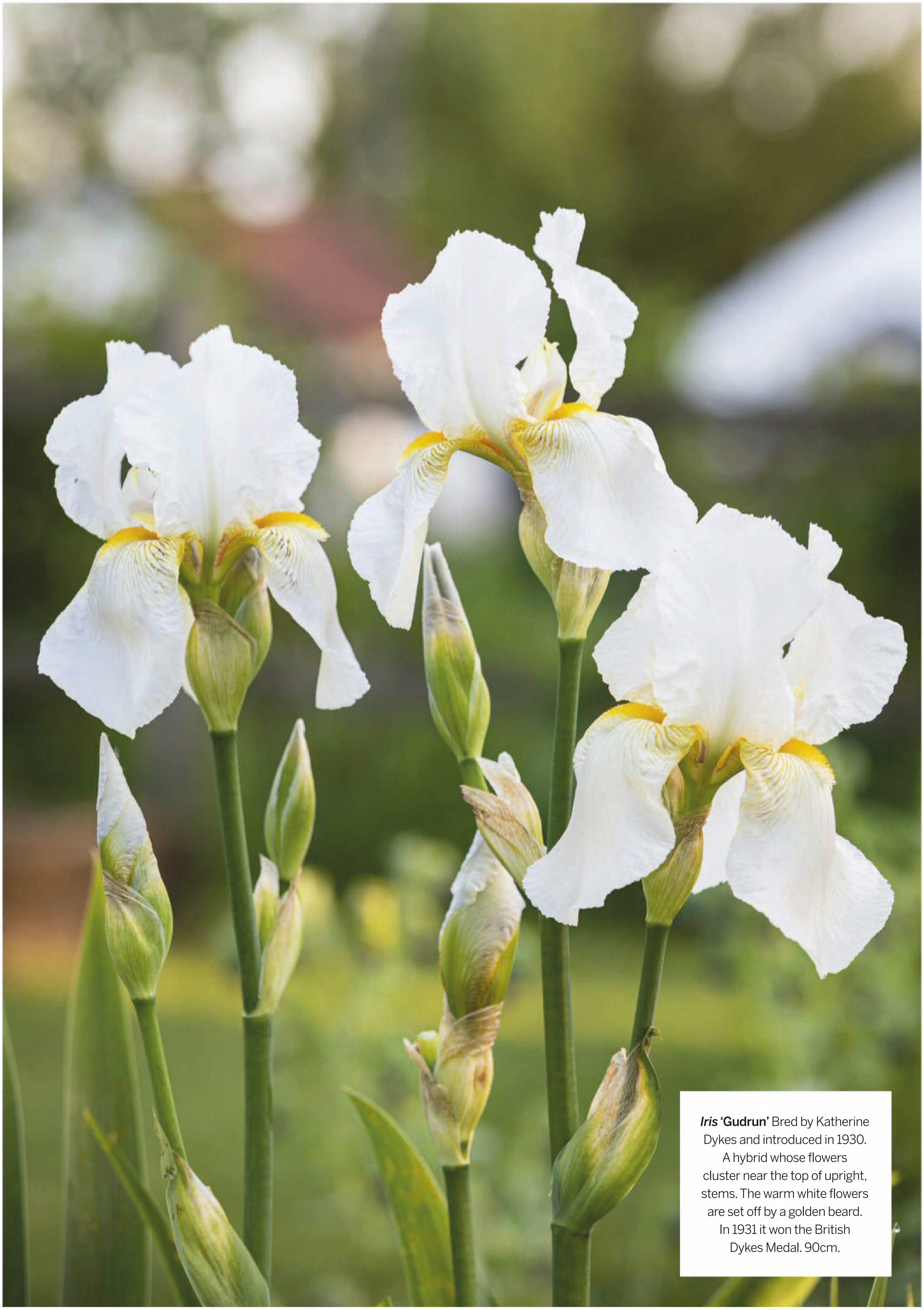
- **The Beth Chatto Gardens**
  Elmstead Market,
  Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB.
  Tel 01206 822007,
  bethchatto.co.uk
- **Binny Plants**
  Binny Estate, Ecclesmachan
  Road, Uphall, West
  Lothian EH52 6NL.
  Tel 01506 858931,
  binnyplants.com
- **Crocus**
  Tel 01344 578111,
  crocus.co.uk
  Mail order only
- **Dove Cottage Nursery and Garden**
  Shibden Hall Road, Halifax,
  West Yorkshire HX3 9XA.
  Tel 01422 203553,
  dovecottagenursery.co.uk
- **Phoenix Perennial Plants**
  Tel 01420 560695.
  Open by appointment only
- **Sarah Raven**
  1 Woodstock Court, Blenheim
  Road, Marlborough,
  Wiltshire SN8 4AN.
  Tel 0345 092 0283,
  sarahraven.com

In the genes

While training as a gardener, Lucy Skellorn unearthed the history of one of her illustrious ancestor's famed success in iris breeding

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

Lucy Skellorn among her collection of irises bred by her great-great-grandfather. These are some of the earliest hybrid irises and the flowers are often highly scented.



***Iris* 'Gudrun'** Bred by Katherine Dykes and introduced in 1930. A hybrid whose flowers cluster near the top of upright, stems. The warm white flowers are set off by a golden beard. In 1931 it won the British Dykes Medal. 90cm.

Lucy Skellorn had always been vaguely aware that one of her ancestors was an important horticulturist but it was only when she started making her own garden that she began to discover the significance of the man and of his work. "You know how it is when you're a child: I didn't listen to my parents when they told us that the portrait hanging in the dining room was Michael Foster, an important scientist and politician who bred irises. We always used to call him 'sausage fingers' because the portrait was unfinished and his hands looked like a bunch of sausages."

A few years ago, while she was training as a gardener and becoming excited by plants, Lucy uncovered in her late mother's papers correspondence between her mother and the Iris Preservation Society. Her mother had been trying to locate plants that had been bred by Michael Foster. Lucy's interest was sparked. She began to look into the work of her great-great-grandfather and to search out his irises. The more she discovered, the more she became excited by the beautiful plants he had introduced.

Lucy was spurred on to dig further into Foster's legacy after hearing a talk by former Sissinghurst head gardener Sarah Cook, who had unearthed many of the irises bred by the artist Cedric Morris. "I spoke to Sarah and explained I was trying to find some of the irises bred by my great-great-grandfather. When I mentioned his name, Sarah got so excited: 'Michael Foster? But he is the father of iris breeding.' I knew then that I had to find his plants and make them more widely available."

Sir Michael Foster was born in Huntingdon in 1836 and eventually occupied the Chair of Physiology at Cambridge University. A scientist whose friends included Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley, his leisure time was spent gardening. He started collecting species irises and, with the help of a network of plant collectors, he eventually acquired almost every species of iris then known. Foster began producing hybrids based on his observations of the qualities of his species plants. His collection acted as a library and he studied the possibilities offered by each species. One of Foster's most important contributions to iris breeding was to introduce tetraploid plants into his programmes. Most plants have two sets of chromosomes, one from each parent, and are known as diploids. A few species contain four sets of chromosomes; these are known as tetraploids and the increased amount of genetic material means that more variety results when they are used in breeding. Tetraploid plants also tend to have larger flowers. The technology to identify chromosomes did not exist when Foster was working and his selections were based purely on observation and on record keeping.

Foster identified 17 species and bred 68 iris hybrids. Lucy's collection contains mainly tall, bearded forms and is now recognised as a National Collection

With the hundreds of iris hybrids available to modern gardeners it is difficult to imagine the sensation Foster's irises generated when they first appeared. Here were plants that had large, colourful flowers, that were robust and that were floriferous – all qualities that gardeners were looking for but had not previously been seen in irises. For Lucy, collecting and saving Foster's plants is important not just because they are beautiful but also because these are the primary hybrids that were at the heart of iris breeding programmes that have continued into the present day.

"I think that irises are stunning plants," says Lucy. "Relatively short lived, maybe, but what gorgeous flowers and never underestimate that foliage, those elegant sword leaves, they are such a great foil for other plants and can give a bit of structure in the winter." Lucy's love of Foster's irises goes beyond the family connection. "These are some of the most beautiful irises. They are the original hybrids before they became overbred. The scent is incredible, much stronger than later hybrids."

Discovering Foster's hybrids has led Lucy to research other early iris breeders. Foster kept meticulous records of his work which were entrusted on his death in 1907 to his friend and executor the horticulturist Ellen Willmott who shared them with an amateur botanist, William Rickatson Dykes. While he was a student Dykes had met Foster and been inspired by him to study the genus. Dykes and his wife Katherine used Foster's notes in their own breeding programme and so continued the work of their mentor. Lucy has now started collecting the plants introduced by the Dykes.

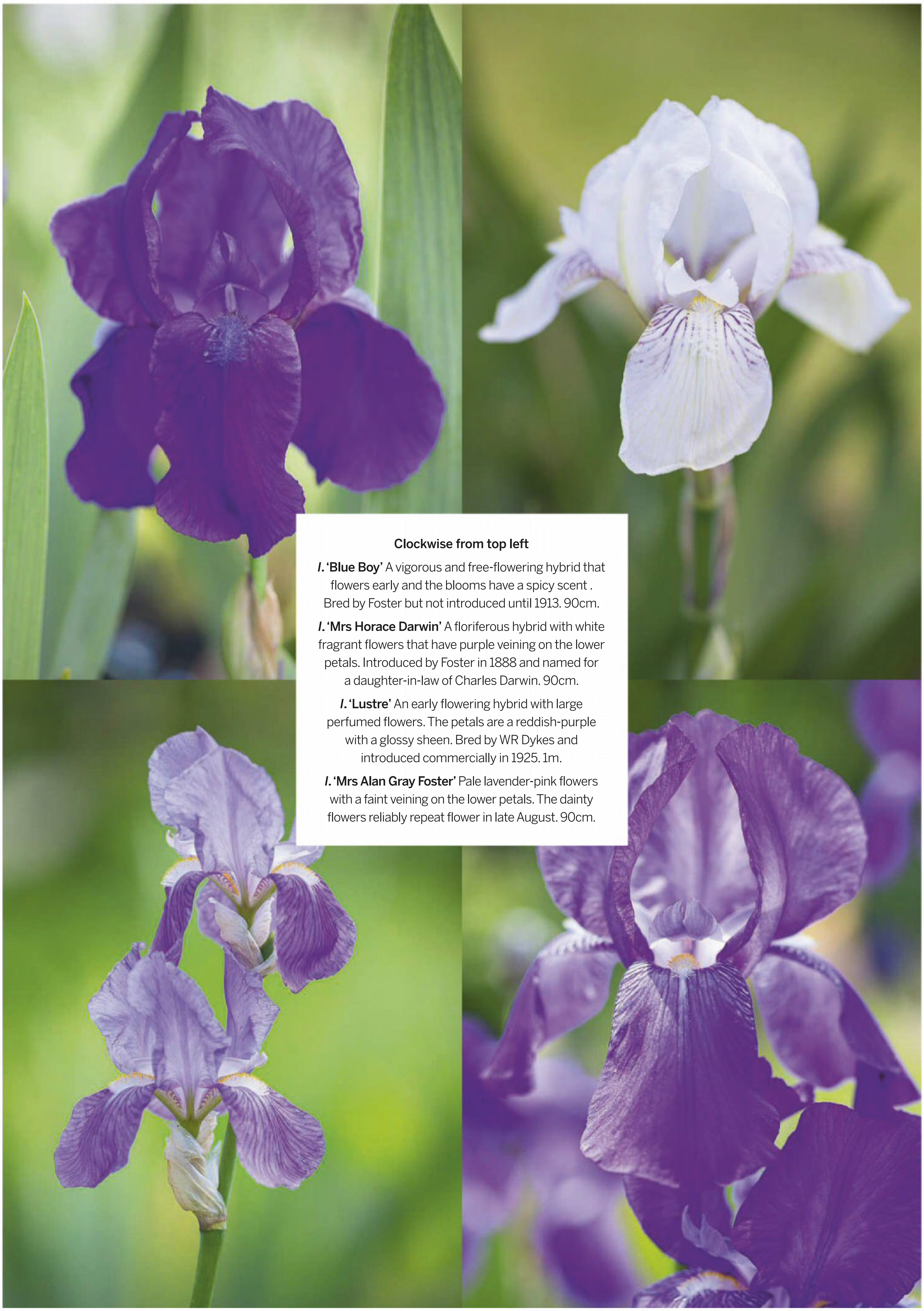
Foster identified 17 species and bred 68 iris hybrids, many of which were introduced posthumously. Lucy's small collection contains mainly tall, bearded forms and is now recognised as a National Collection. Tracking down irises bred so long ago is hard work. "It is tough and I feel that I have got the obvious hybrids but there are many more, maybe lost forever, as well as species plants that he named," says Lucy. "There is some academic work connected to keeping a National Collection but not scarily so and I have found the research really enjoyable." Lucy continues to look for Foster's irises and opens her National Collection to public by a appointment so that a wider audience can see, and smell, her ancestor's beautiful creations. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Lucy's National Collection at **fosteririses.com**

Turn the page for more of Lucy's iris collection

To increase the number of plants available, Lucy grows irises from her National Collection in raised beds. She sells surplus plants at local plant fairs.



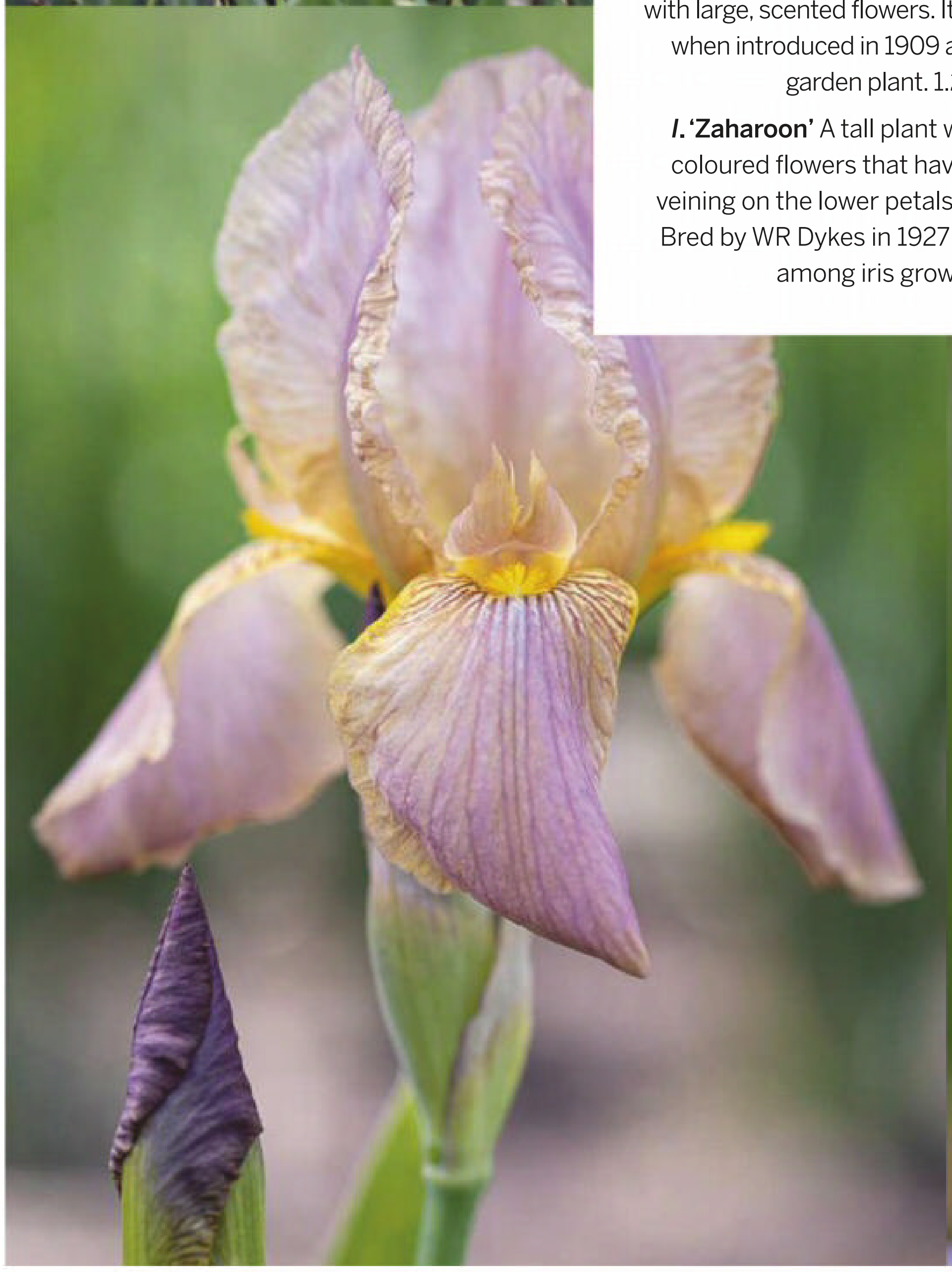
Clockwise from top left

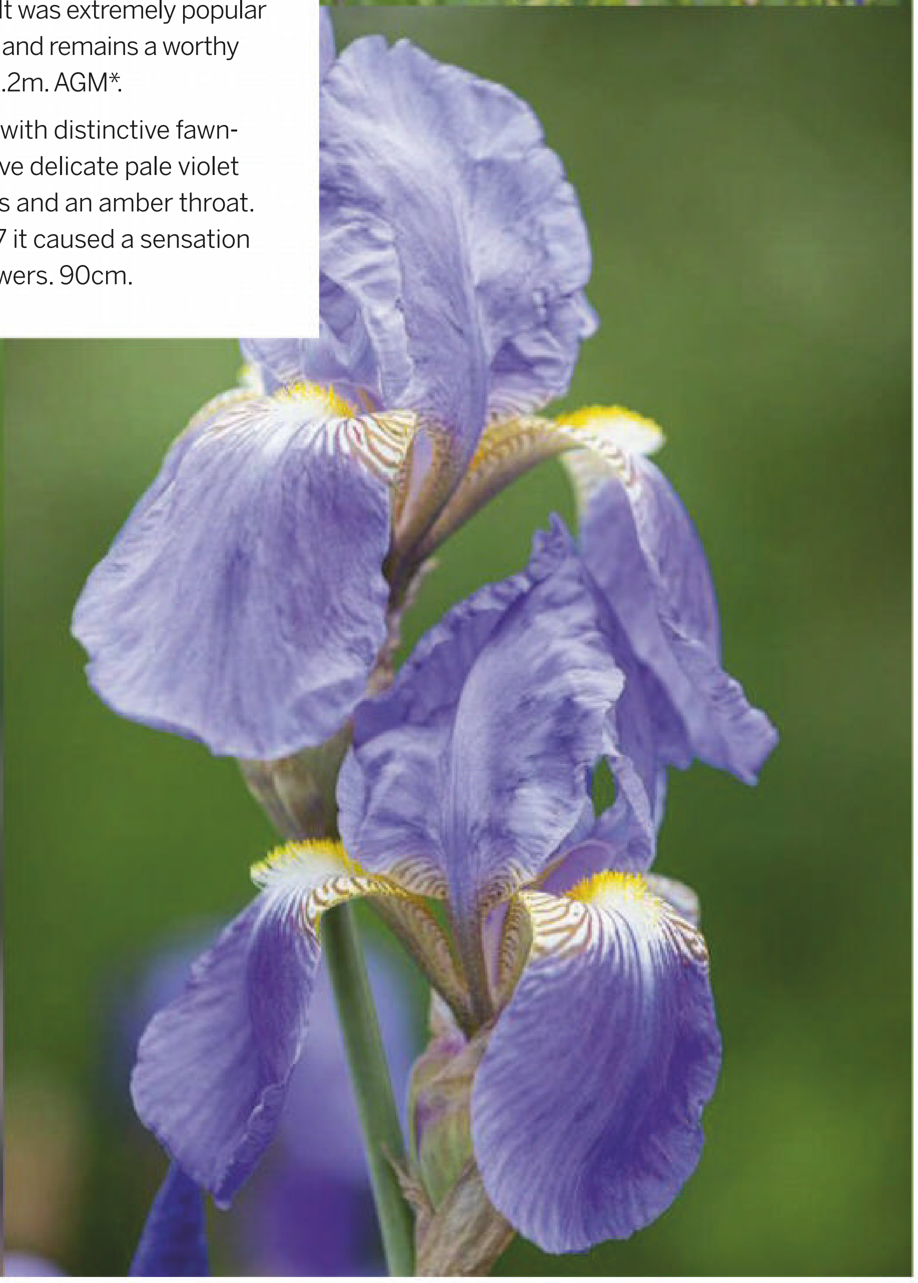
***I.* 'Blue Boy'** A vigorous and free-flowering hybrid that flowers early and the blooms have a spicy scent . Bred by Foster but not introduced until 1913. 90cm.

***I.* 'Mrs Horace Darwin'** A floriferous hybrid with white fragrant flowers that have purple veining on the lower petals. Introduced by Foster in 1888 and named for a daughter-in-law of Charles Darwin. 90cm.

***I.* 'Lustre'** An early flowering hybrid with large perfumed flowers. The petals are a reddish-purple with a glossy sheen. Bred by WR Dykes and introduced commercially in 1925. 1m.

***I.* 'Mrs Alan Gray Foster'** Pale lavender-pink flowers with a faint veining on the lower petals. The dainty flowers reliably repeat flower in late August. 90cm.





Clockwise from above

Bearded iris prefer well-drained soil but Lucy gardens on clay. "I am a massive mulcher so that my heavy soil becomes more free draining. The iris seem to thrive on it," she says.

***I.* 'Caterina'** Crossing *I. pallida* with a species collected in Cyprus produced an elegant, floriferous iris with large, scented flowers. It was extremely popular when introduced in 1909 and remains a worthy garden plant. 1.2m. AGM*.

***I.* 'Zaharoon'** A tall plant with distinctive fawn-coloured flowers that have delicate pale violet veining on the lower petals and an amber throat. Bred by WR Dykes in 1927 it caused a sensation among iris growers. 90cm.

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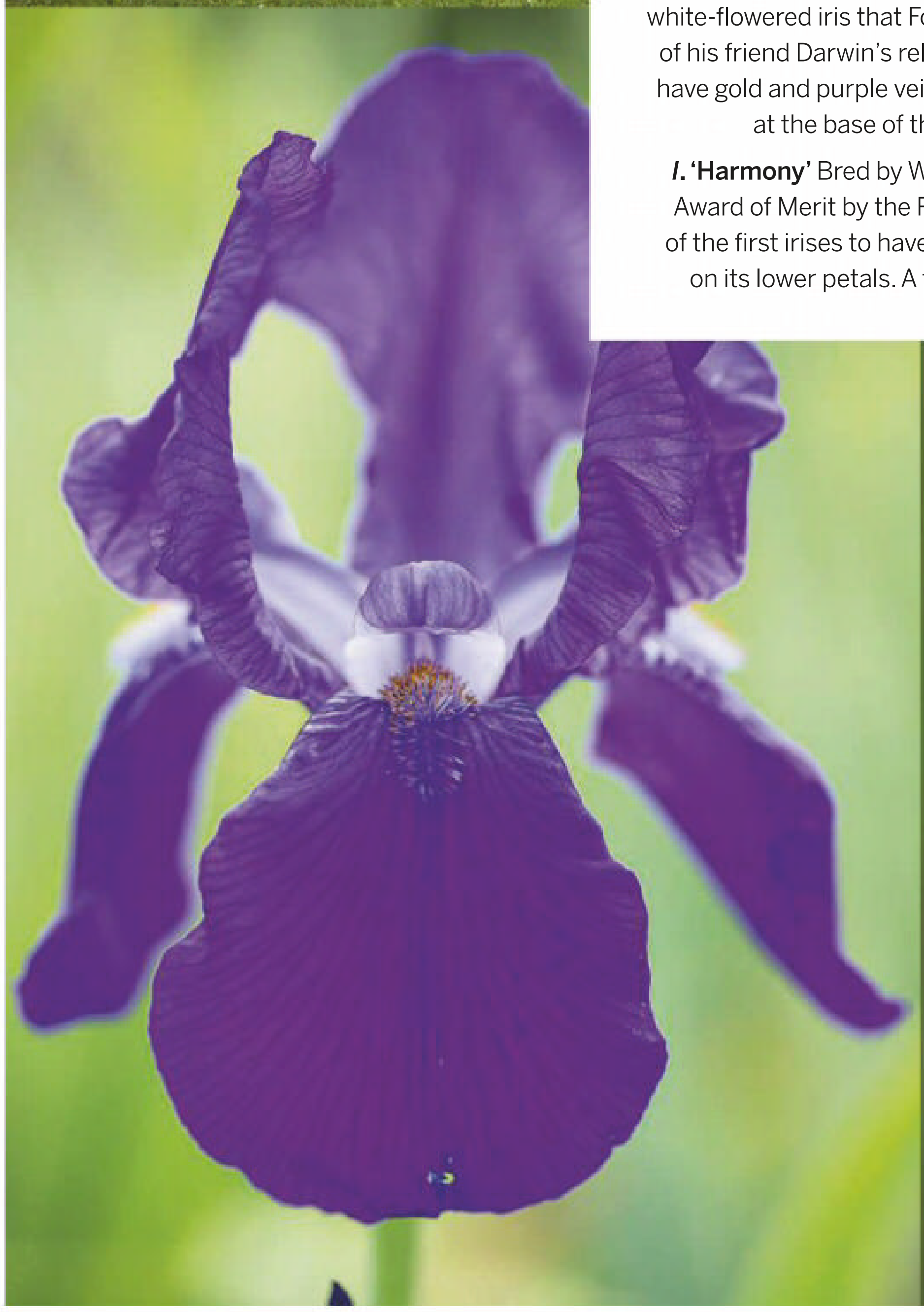
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Most bearded irises have a hardiness rating of RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

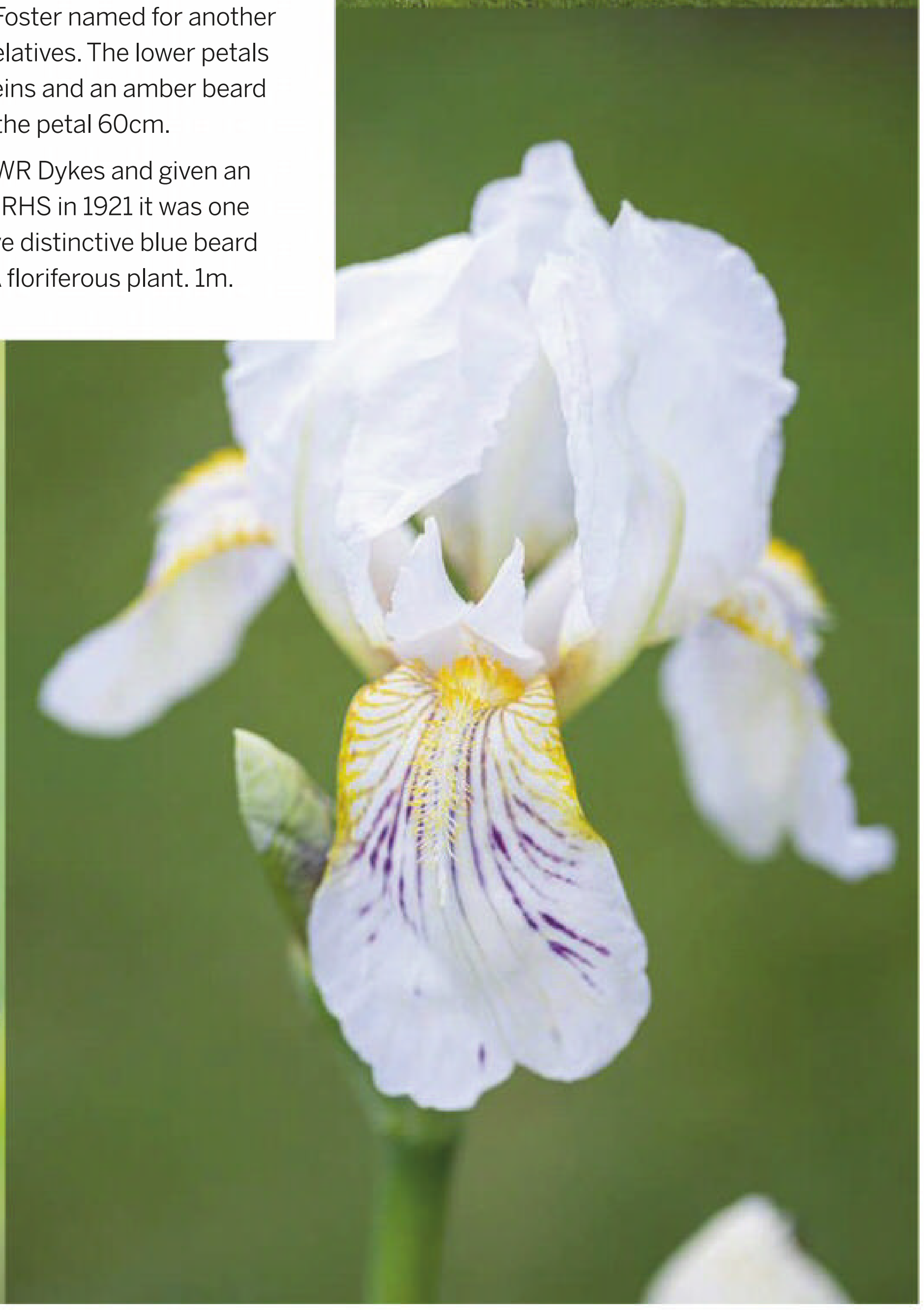
Clockwise from above

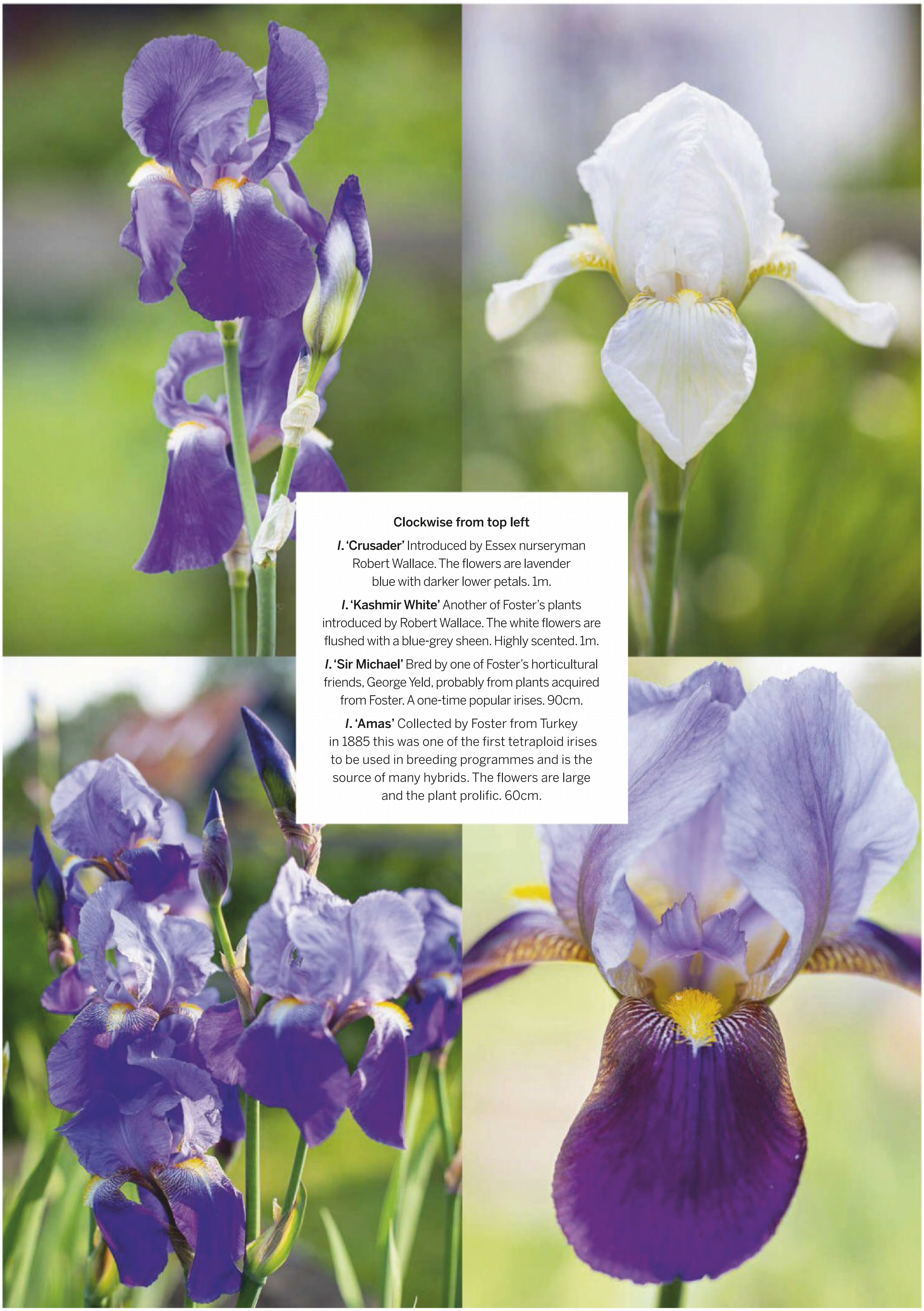
Lucy loves the irises as much for their gorgeous flowers and useful foliage as for her family connection to them, and has many growing in her Suffolk garden. After the flowering season is over the iris leaves provide strong vertical accents.

I. **'Mrs George Darwin'** A highly scented, white-flowered iris that Foster named for another of his friend Darwin's relatives. The lower petals have gold and purple veins and an amber beard at the base of the petal 60cm.

I. **'Harmony'** Bred by WR Dykes and given an Award of Merit by the RHS in 1921 it was one of the first irises to have distinctive blue beard on its lower petals. A floriferous plant. 1m.







Clockwise from top left

I. **'Crusader'** Introduced by Essex nurseryman Robert Wallace. The flowers are lavender blue with darker lower petals. 1m.

I. **'Kashmir White'** Another of Foster's plants introduced by Robert Wallace. The white flowers are flushed with a blue-grey sheen. Highly scented. 1m.

I. **'Sir Michael'** Bred by one of Foster's horticultural friends, George Yeld, probably from plants acquired from Foster. A one-time popular irises. 90cm.

I. **'Amas'** Collected by Foster from Turkey in 1885 this was one of the first tetraploid irises to be used in breeding programmes and is the source of many hybrids. The flowers are large and the plant prolific. 60cm.

ROSY HARDY

The renowned plantswoman behind Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants on a childhood learning the names of wildflowers, and the art of combining plants in a real garden setting

WORDS **ANNIE GATTI** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

Since the nursery's first flower show in Bedfordshire in 1989, the name Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants has been synonymous with exquisite displays of herbaceous plants in garden settings. It is a family-run nursery, born when Rosy Hardy and her husband Rob combined their talents – Rosy's for plant propagation, selection and combining, and Rob's for landscaping and logistics – to become the renowned Hampshire nursery with a staff of 13 who nurture more than 1,200 types of herbaceous perennial.

The story of how Rosy became one of the UK's most trusted growers of plants that have become stars of borders and containers in so many gardens starts in Northumberland where her parents settled, after various postings abroad. She was an outdoors girl, and inquisitive. "By asking my mother I got to know every single wildflower in the countryside around us." When it came to career choice she thought she wanted to work on a farm but was told she was the wrong sex for that. Horticulture was then suggested and she had the luck to be in a school that offered an O level in the subject and had a walled garden. A degree in commercial horticulture followed, then two jobs in vegetable production. When she met Rob, a farmer's son, he had already been helping his sister Anne Liverman with her landscaping business in Derbyshire. Anne was to become an important member of the family nursery, as was Rosy's mother, and splits from many of her cottage garden plants became some of the most desirable items at the car boot sales Rosy and Rob attended. "People loved these plants, so we decided to specialise."

> IF YOU SEE A PLANT IN THE WILD AND HOW IT NATURALLY GROWS YOU CAN UNDERSTAND HOW TO KEEP IT

They quickly built up a presence at local flower shows, always presenting the plants in landscapes that incorporated zones requiring a range of conditions – damp, dry, sunny, shady. Right plant, right place is central to Rosy's gardening ethos, and this message is one of the reasons she continues to embrace the physical demands of exhibiting at shows. Initially selling at shows was an economic necessity, as they didn't have a premises, but even after they settled in a walled garden in Hampshire, they continued on the circuit. "I prefer face-to-face selling, telling people how the plants work and where to put them." she says. One of her bugbears at shows, such as the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, where to date Hardy's has been awarded 24 gold medals, is when top designers make combinations that just wouldn't work in a real garden setting. Occasionally, Rosy admits, she feels compelled to let one of the judges know.

Two qualities Rosy demands of her plants are that they are strong – they need to be able to survive in northern gardens as well as in the south, and are allowed to dry out between watering sessions – and make good companions. Having introduced such exceptional performers as *Geum* 'Totally Tangerine' and *Gaura lindheimeri* Rosyjane (= 'Harrosy'), it's clear Rosy has a very keen eye for selection. But, she explains, there is also a rigorous checklist for every plant that she is considering: is it different in colour, habit, height or thrives in different conditions to related plants; does it re-bloom; does it have particularly good foliage? And for the past ten years she has only taken on new plants by British breeders. It's part of the nursery's sustainability policy, which now includes being 99.5 per cent peat free (they still haven't found the ideal peat-free compost for the different types of cuttings they do), increased biological controls in the tunnels and compostable pots for mail order plants.

Rosy's skill at combining plants comes from having spent many years observing plants closely. "Sometimes you can put plants together that most people would consider as being opposing colours," she explains. "But if you look at the centres and they are the same colour or they have similar tones – and the plants are a completely different shape and height – then they will work and you can blend them."

Understanding how each plant behaves in its natural environment is also key. Most years Rosy manages to go botanising abroad, which she would much rather do than visiting gardens. "If you see a plant in the wild and see how it naturally grows, and the different forms of it, depending on seedling variation, you can understand how to keep it going in the garden."

She is focussed on re-introducing native plants such as silenes, some umbellifers and geraniums to gardeners in the UK. "They are more wildlife friendly, and should naturally be in our gardens. But not everyone can have a weed patch, and enjoy it, so I am finding native species that are more showy, and will suit specific areas such as shady or dry." □

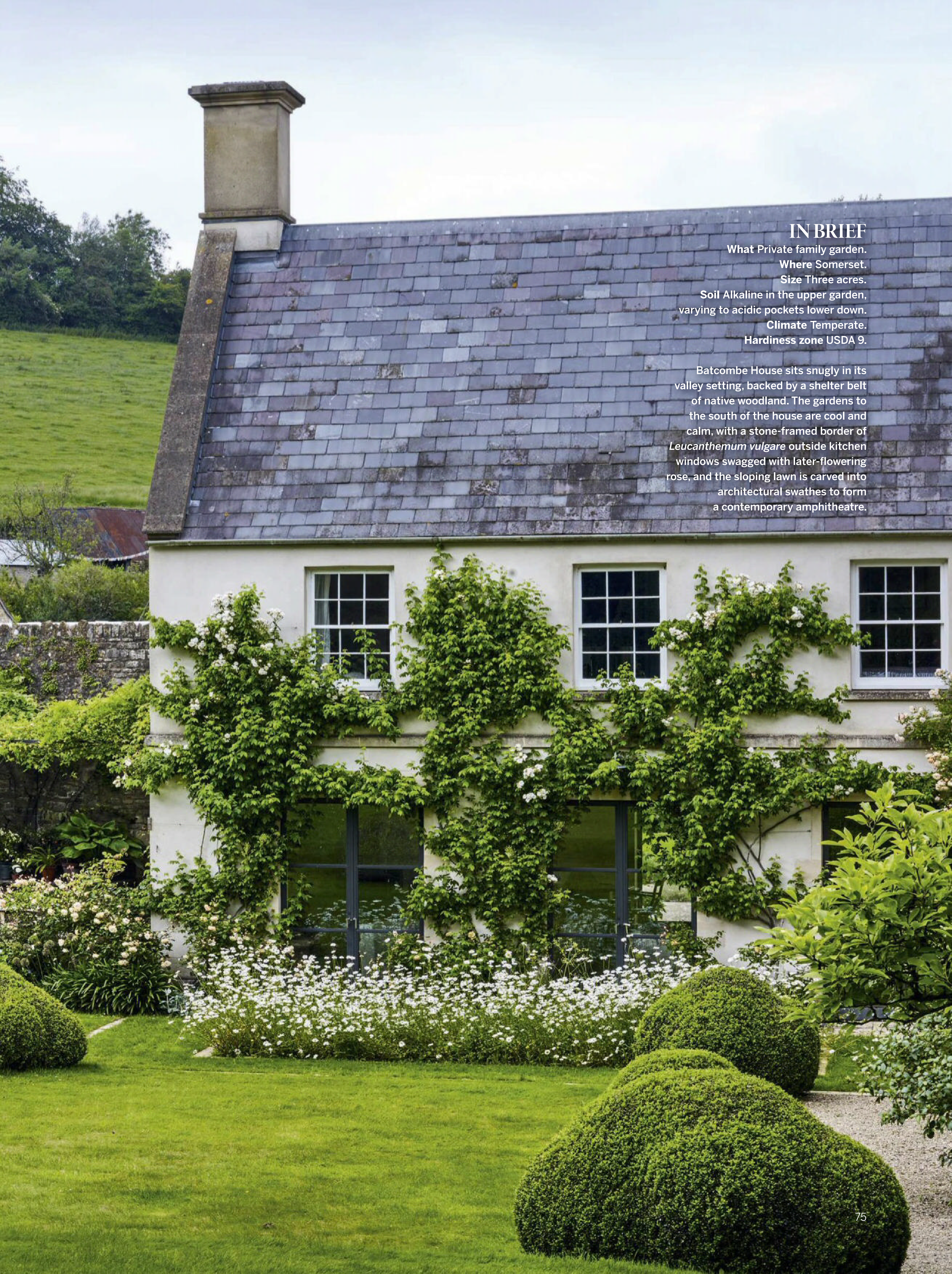
USEFUL INFORMATION

Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, Priory Lane Nursery,
Freefolk Priors, Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7FA.
Tel 01256 896533, hardysplants.co.uk

Place setting

In her own Somerset garden, designer Libby Russell has created a unified sense of place in a garden of two distinct halves

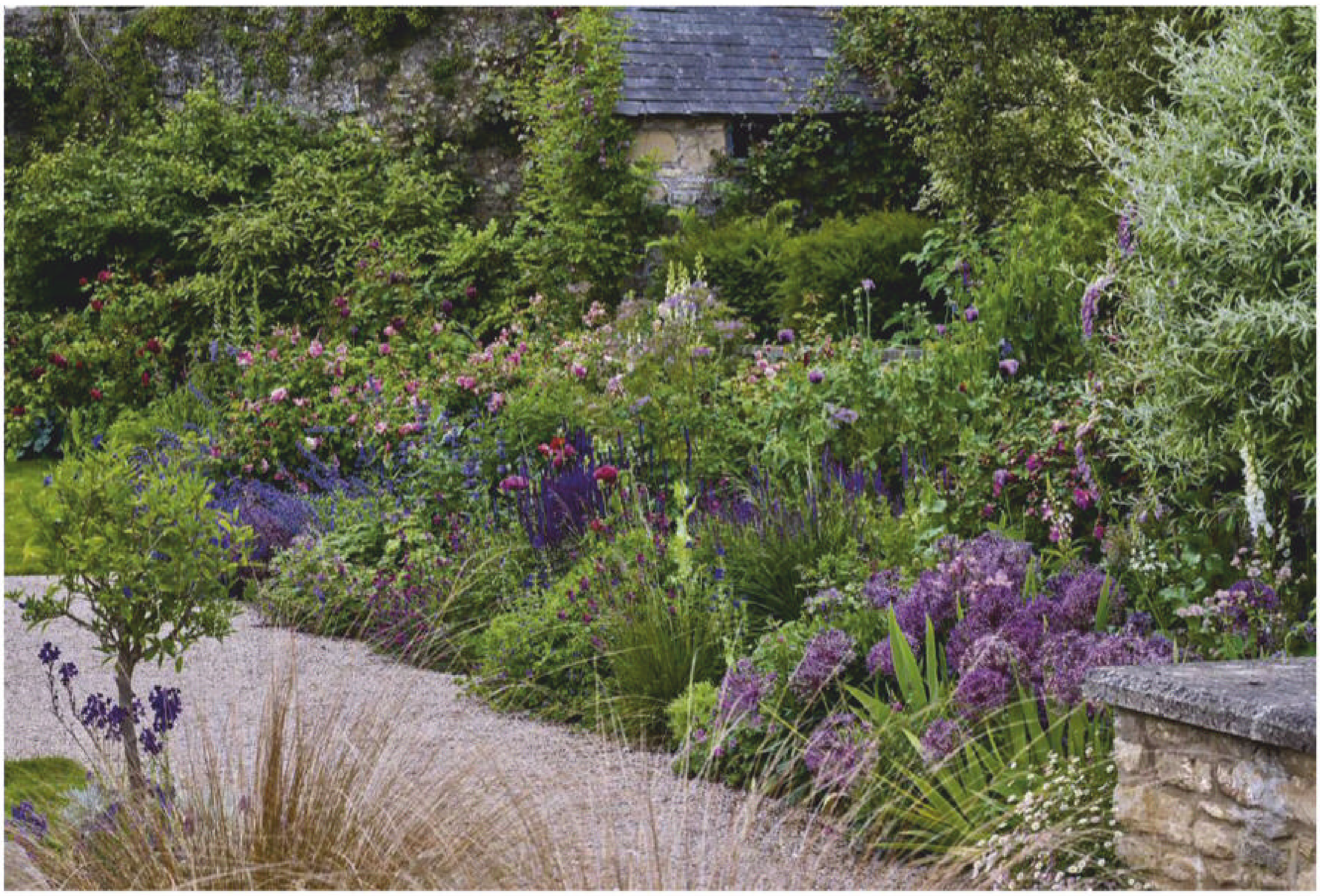
WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



IN BRIEF

What Private family garden.
Where Somerset.
Size Three acres.
Soil Alkaline in the upper garden, varying to acidic pockets lower down.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Batcombe House sits snugly in its valley setting, backed by a shelter belt of native woodland. The gardens to the south of the house are cool and calm, with a stone-framed border of *Leucanthemum vulgare* outside kitchen windows swagged with later-flowering rose, and the sloping lawn is carved into architectural swathes to form a contemporary amphitheatre.



This is a magical place and I wanted to create a garden that was part of that," says Libby Russell of her rural Somerset home. When she first set eyes on Batcombe House, Libby saw that its ancient valley setting had the potential to contain something really special, and she has spent the past 19 years perfecting that vision.

The 18th-century building, sensitively restored and stylishly extended, is now embraced by a garden of two halves, divided by a retaining wall of soft local stone. To the south and west, lawns punctuated by hummocks of box rise in an amphitheatre of curves scythed into the slope. This cool, modernist space conjures the aesthetic of contemporary land forming, fringed with deep, undulating borders planted in a harmonious sweep of cool greens and whites with touches of colour.

To the north, the style is more classic country estate. There is a herb garden just a short step from the kitchen, a formal lawn framed by gravel pathways, and a spring-fed water tank (full of native crayfish) set within a deep herbaceous border. On this side of the house, the rising land is retained by a beautifully crafted wall of local Doulting stone and wide steps that lead past a tumble of roses to an impressive kitchen garden crammed with vegetables and flowers in a riot of rich colour. Further up the slope the garden gradually quietens back down, through a swimming pool garden backed by wildflower banks, hiding a tennis court, an orchard and then the fields beyond.

There is an underlying logic to the progressions and connections between these various garden elements that make it hard to imagine the space ever looked different but this, of course, is the hidden hallmark of excellent design. "Grading the site was pretty complicated," says Libby.

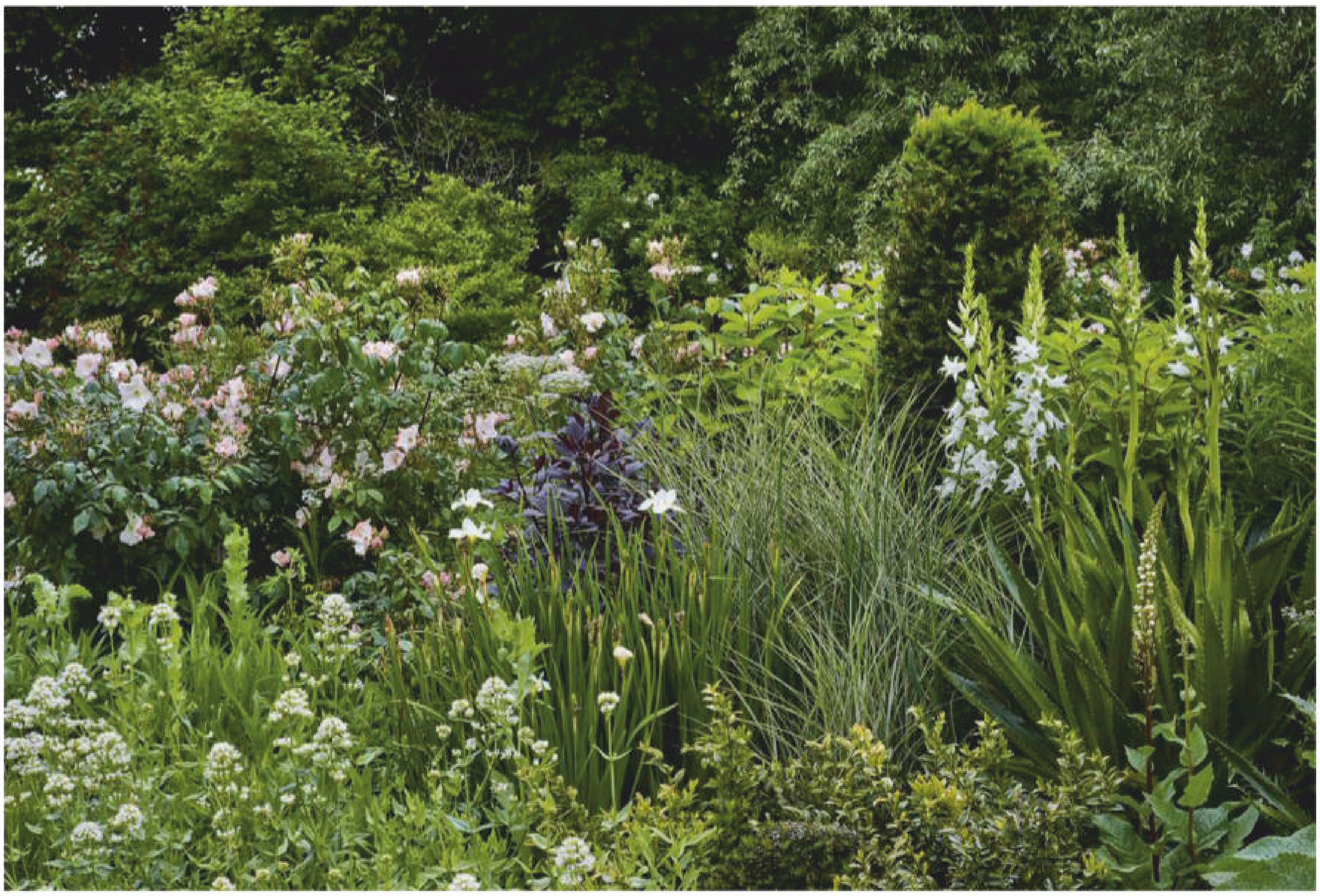
Fortunately, she was well equipped for the task. Libby has an MA in Landscape Architecture from the University of Greenwich and spent many years working with garden designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd before setting up her own design partnership, Mazzullo + Russell, with Emma Mazzullo six years ago. "Although it is rather different being ▷

Above In the deep border, which runs either side of the stone-walled water tank, the elegant, clipped, silver-leaved *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula' complements soft lavender, alliums, deep purple spikes of *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna', *Rosa* 'Felicia' and *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant'.

Right Leading towards the kitchen garden steps is an avenue of pyramid yews, underplanted with a pointillist mix of santolinas, alchemillas and *Phlomis tuberosa* 'Amazone', punctuated with *Linaria maroccana* Little Sweeties mixture and *Lychnis coronaria* Gardeners' World (= 'Blych') among others.

The 18th-century building, sensitively restored, is now embraced by a garden of two halves

Repetition introduces a sense of harmony, as the sloping site means each garden area can be seen from every other



▷ your own client. We could only do the garden in stages, as funds allowed, but everything was set out on a masterplan before the first bit of work began."

With the site perfectly graded and landscaped by some exceptional local contractors, Libby approached the planting with relish. She is passionate about finding the best forms of truly garden-worthy plants. "I don't want alien exotics here. It is important that this remains a garden of this place, but I also want it to speak of where plants are going today." Inevitably, at this time of year it is the roses, in a palette of pink, peach and soft white, that catch the eye. "I often use one key plant to create harmony around the amphitheatre, such as the large-flowered *Rosa* 'Sally Holmes', or *Rosa* 'Felicia' set off by masses of *Alchemilla mollis* and various forms of nepeta," says Libby, who is currently co-chairing an RHS trial of nepetas with Great Dixter's head gardener Fergus Garrett. "These are all plants that feel at home in a rural setting." But she might choose *N.* x *faassenii* Junior Walker (= 'Novanepjun'), instead of the more familiar *N. racemosa* 'Walker's Low', and also has stunning blue *N.* 'Weinheim Big Blue', floriferous dusky pink *N. racemosa* 'Amelia', and July-flowering *N. nuda* 'Romany Dusk' with its dark stems and impactful lilac spires.

Whatever she is planting, Libby uses bold repetition to introduce a sense of harmony, since the steeply sloping site means each garden area can be seen from every other one. The amphitheatre borders remain calm throughout the year but the northern side of the garden starts in June with a palette of soft pinks building to a unified crescendo of saturated colour as autumn comes. Libby aims for a progression in colour and interest every six weeks. It is a complicated exercise, but one she constantly seeks to refine. "I think being a gardener is like being a painter with a 3D printer. You have to work with colour and form, but also with time. The practicalities of site and soil underpin everything, but a good garden should express a series of moments within an unchanging place." ☐

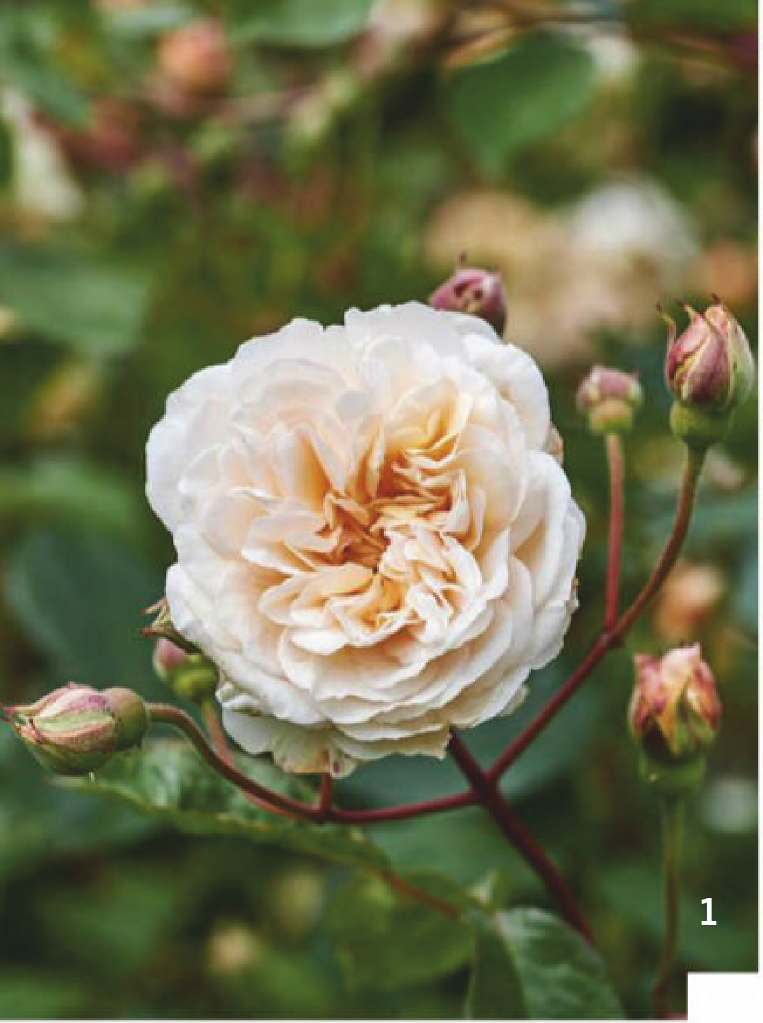
USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Mazzullo + Russell's work at **mazzullorusselllandscapedesign.com**

Turn the page for eight key roses from Batcombe

Above Pretty, apricot-pink *Rosa* 'Sally Holmes', spires of *Campanula latifolia* var. *macrantha* 'Alba', ornamental grasses and spears of iris foliage are framed by a froth of *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus' in the foreground.

Left The sinuous borders framing the sculpted lawns make good use of selected hardy geraniums, including *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat') and *Geranium* 'Blue Cloud', and interesting foliage as varied as the glaucous *Hosta sieboldiana* var. *elegans* and chartreuse *Euphorbia palustris*.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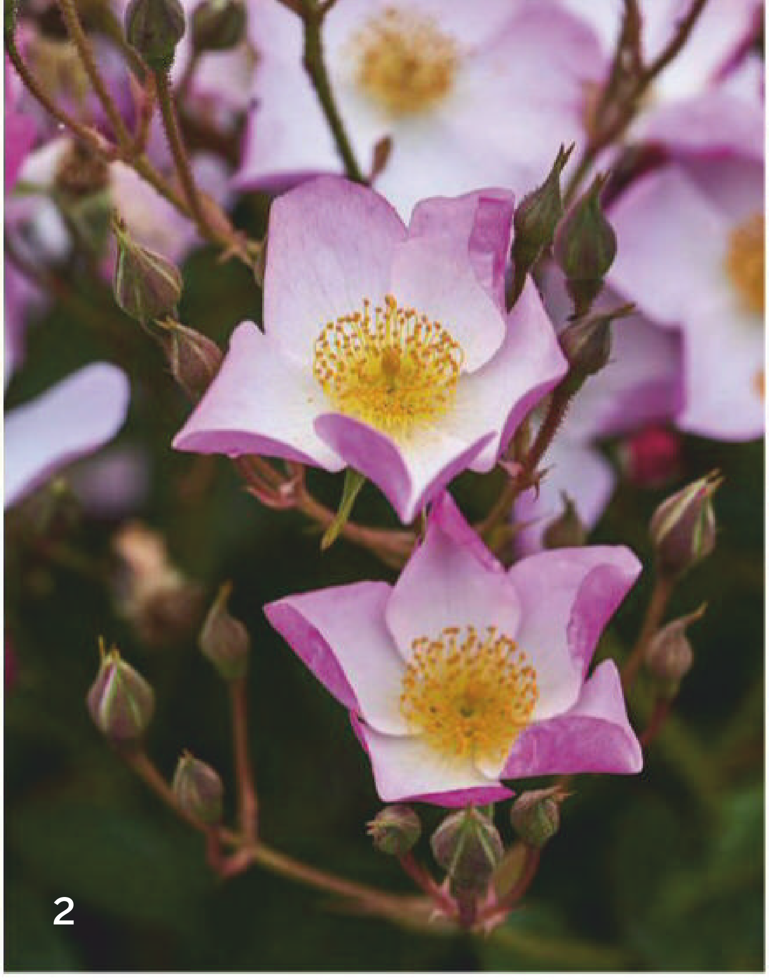
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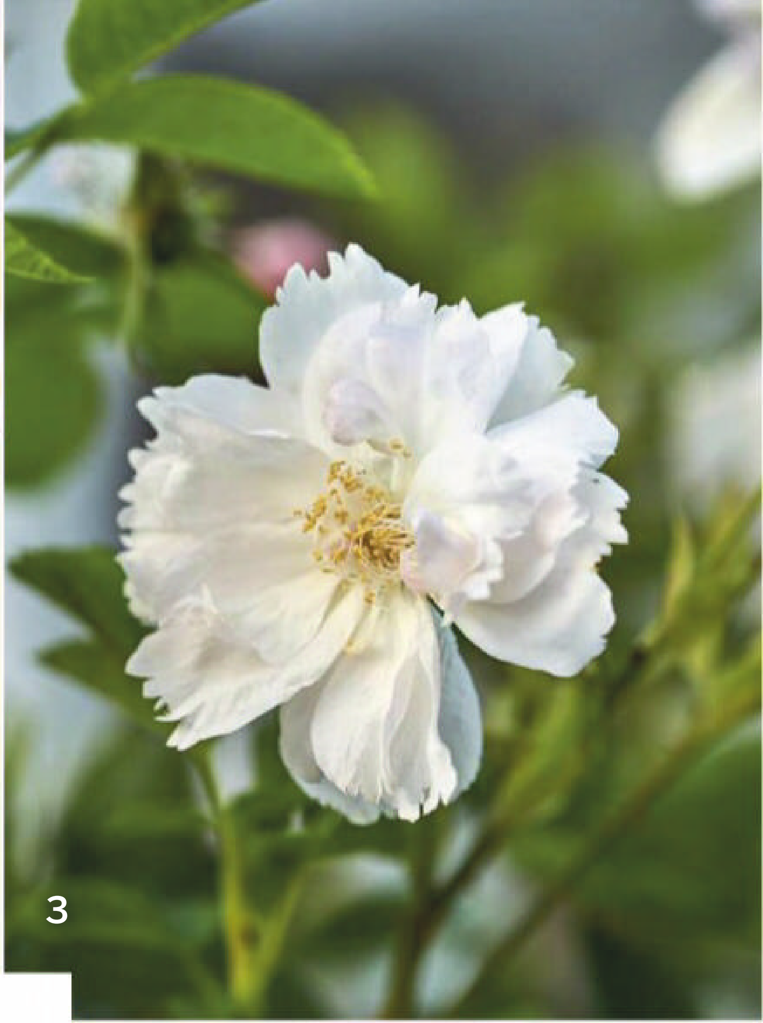
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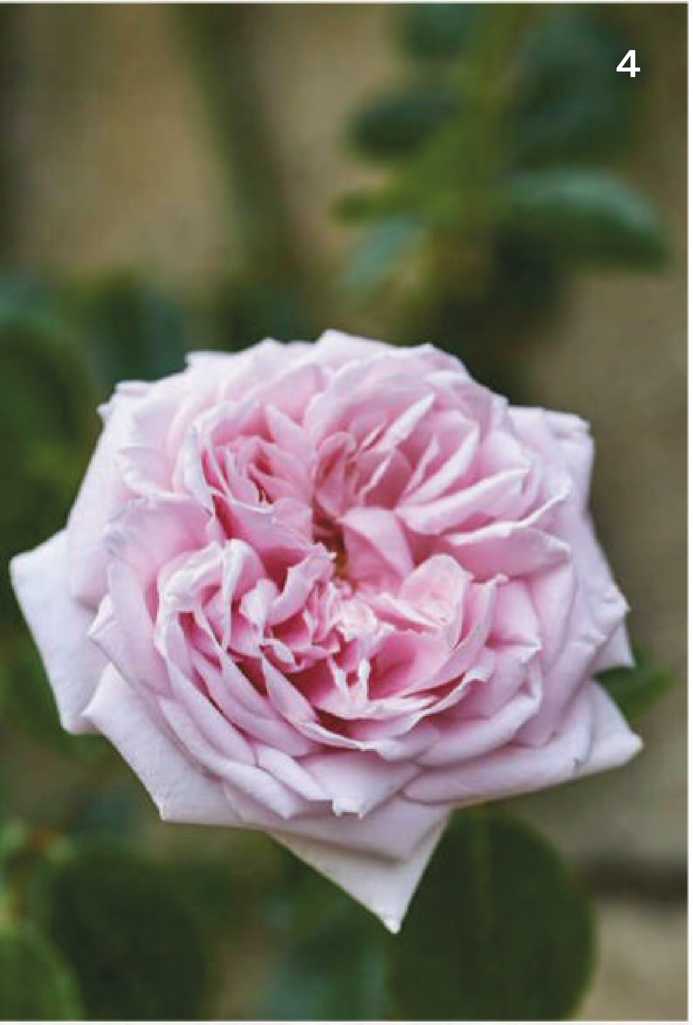
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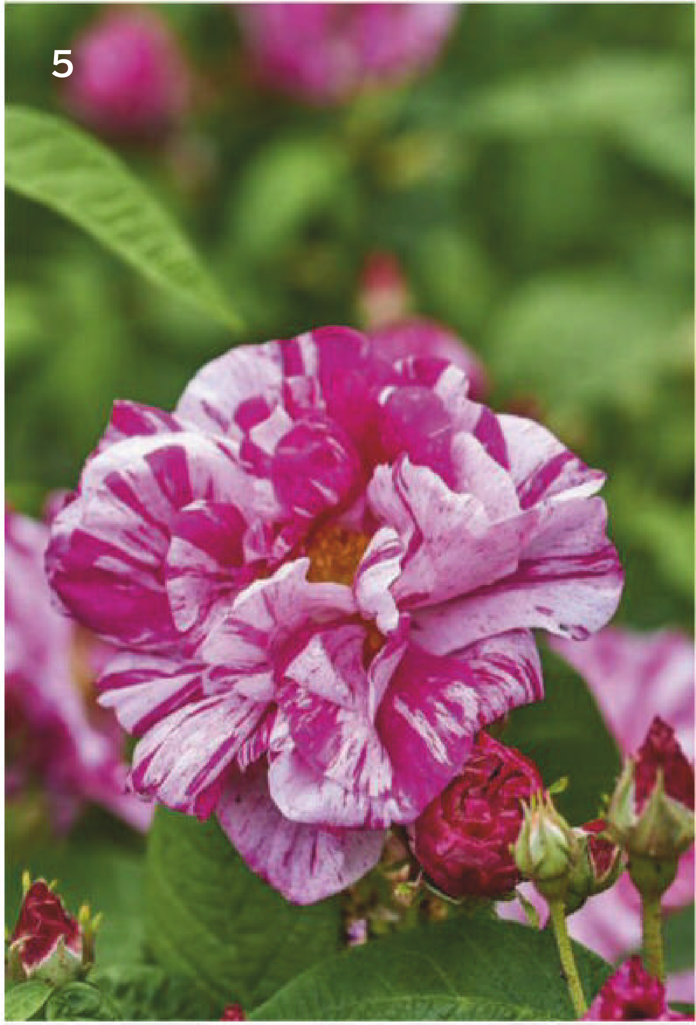
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8 KEY ROSES

1 *Rosa* 'Buff Beauty' A classic hybrid musk rose with the best buff colour. It repeats well and will form a vigorous, medium-sized shrub. 1.2m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b†.

2 *Rosa* Lyda Rose (= 'Letlyda') A romantic small rose that looks like a wild rose but repeats. It associates well with ox-eye daisies and wildflowers. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Rosa* 'White Grootendorst' An elegant relation to the pink version, with frilly flowers that are wonderful for picking. It will continue flowering right into autumn. 1.2m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

4 *Rosa* Awakening (= 'Probuzení') The double version of pink 'New Dawn'. Continues to flower throughout the season, even on a north-facing wall. 3m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

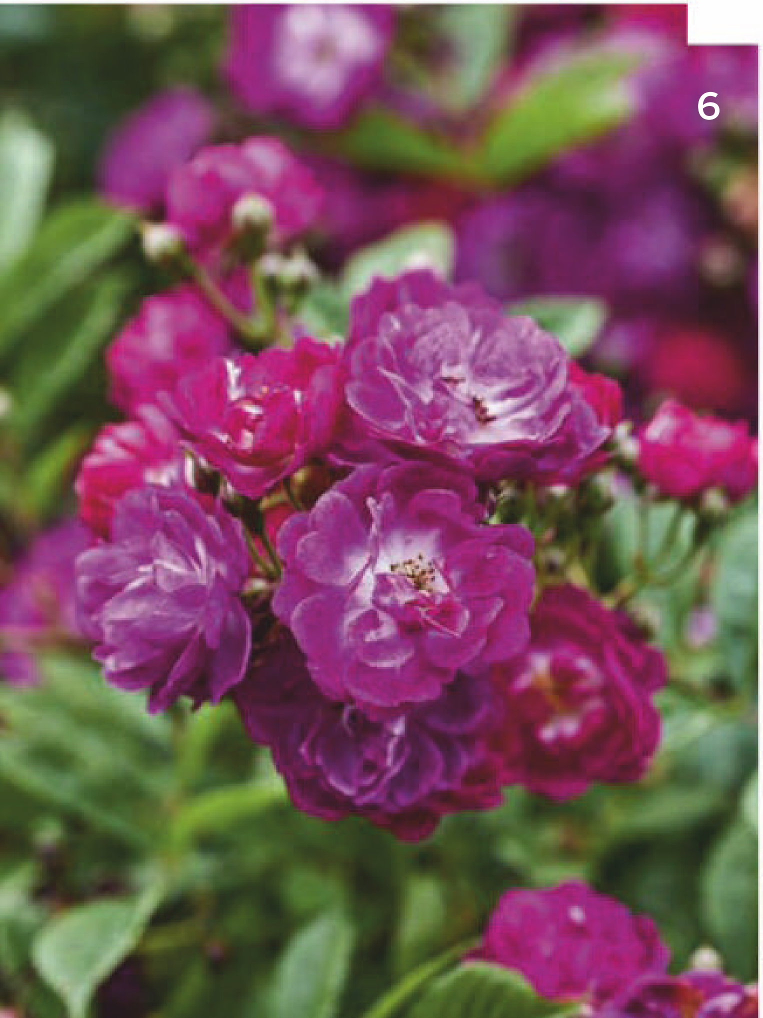
5 *Rosa gallica* 'Versicolor' (rosa mundi) A favourite historic rose. Its highly fragrant pink flowers are striped and spotted with crimson. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

6 *Rosa* Perennial Blue (= 'Mehv9601') A lovely magenta rambler with a delicate fragrance that repeats really well. Healthy but, unlike some ramblers, will not rampage out of control. 3m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

7 *Rosa* 'Sally Holmes' Its large, soft-white to apricot-pink flowers are almost luminous around the banks in this garden and it repeats reliably. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

8 *Rosa* 'Felicia' Libby's favourite pale-pink hybrid musk rose, with a wonderful fragrance. A vigorous cultivar that repeats so well and is a perfect warm pink. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.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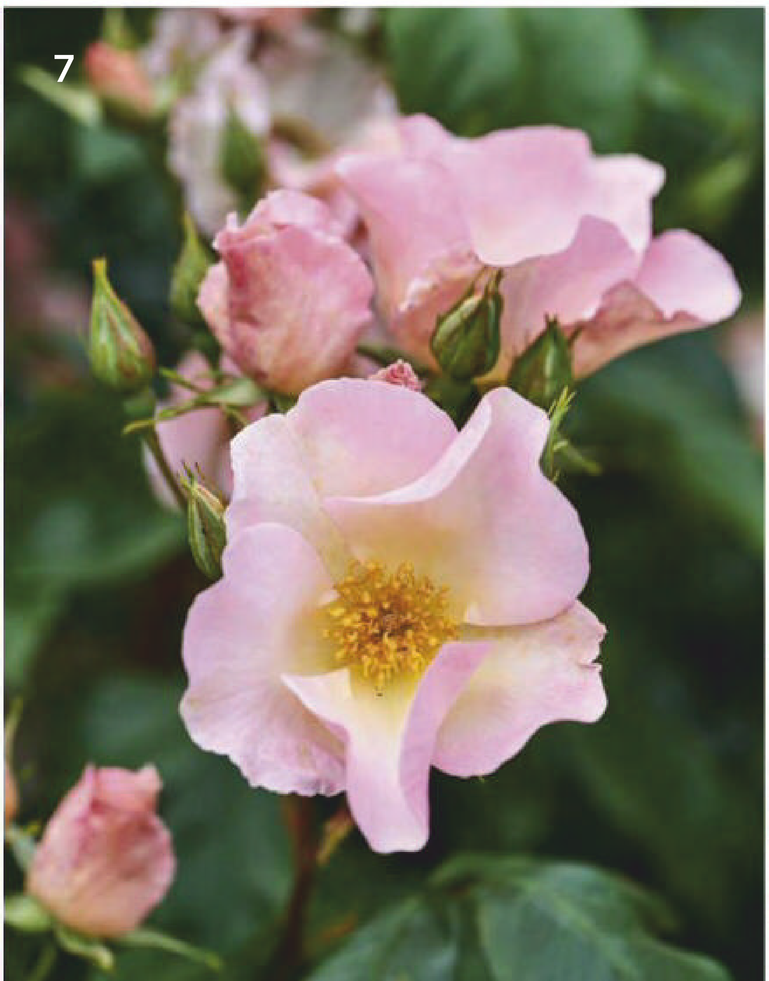
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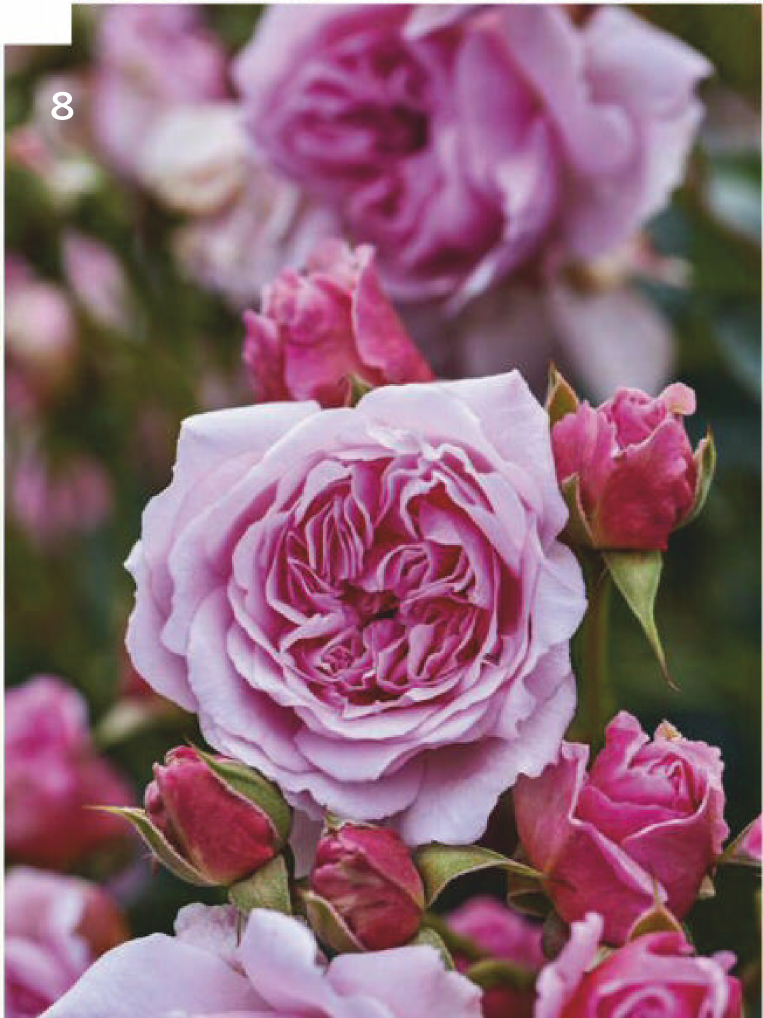
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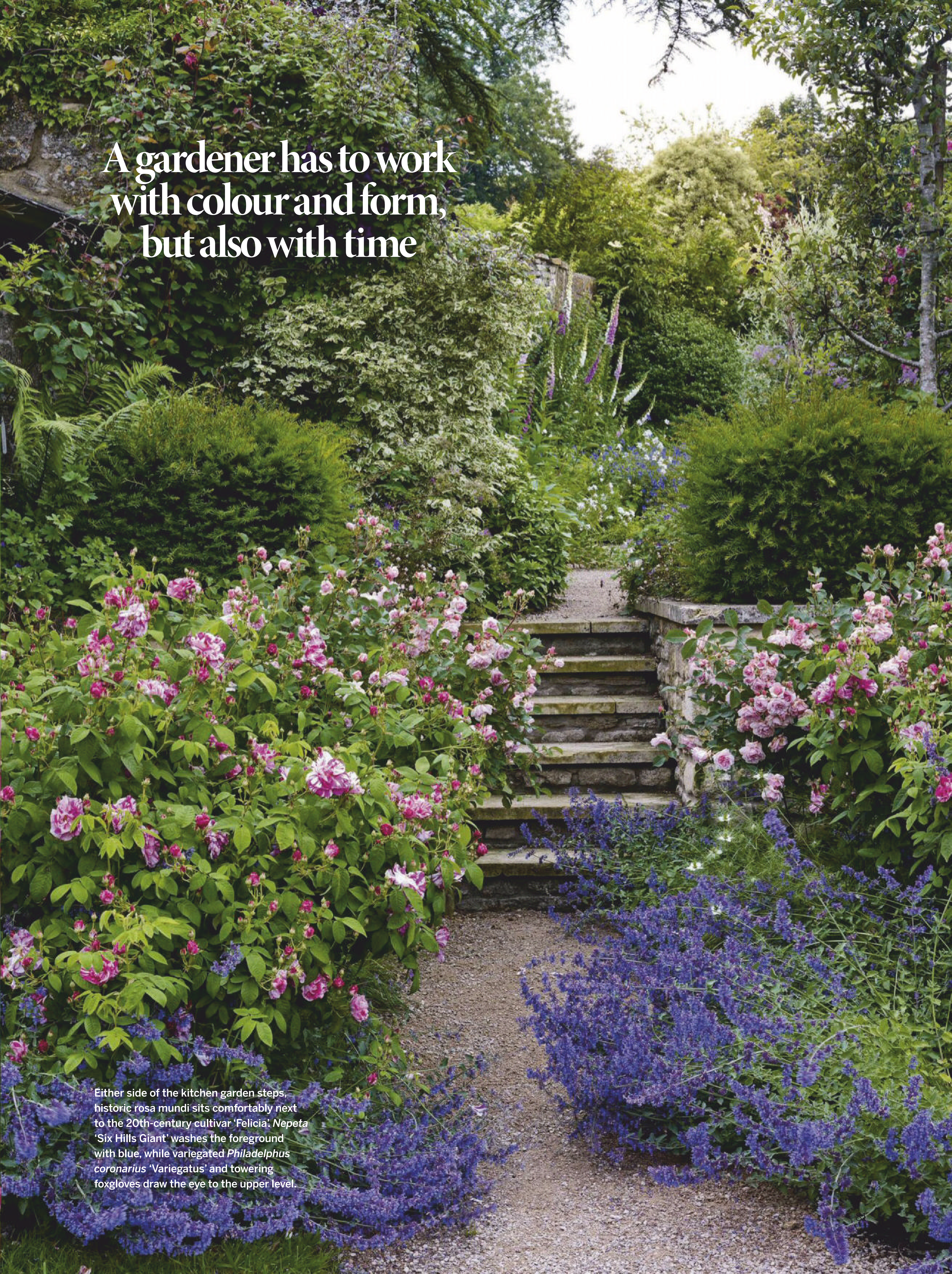


A gardener has to work with colour and form, but also with time

Either side of the kitchen garden steps, historic rosa mundi sits comfortably next to the 20th-century cultivar 'Felicia'. *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant' washes the foreground with blue, while variegated *Philadelphus coronarius* 'Variegatus' and towering foxgloves draw the eye to the upper level.

IN BRIEF

Name Manor Farm.
What A wildflower farm expertly managed for maximum ecological benefit.
Where Somerset.
Size 200 acres with 30 acres cultivated specifically for wildflower seed.
Soil Calcareous soil over Jurassic limestone.
Climate Temperate maritime. Characterised by cool winters, warm summers and precipitation all year round.
Hardiness zone USDA 9a.

At Manor Farm, fields are coloured by wide bands of graceful wildflowers, such as *Papaver rhoeas* the common poppy, which are buzzing with insect life.

True to nature

The sensitive ecological stewardship of Manor Farm is driven by a desire to restore habitats and to supply wildflower seed with provenance

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

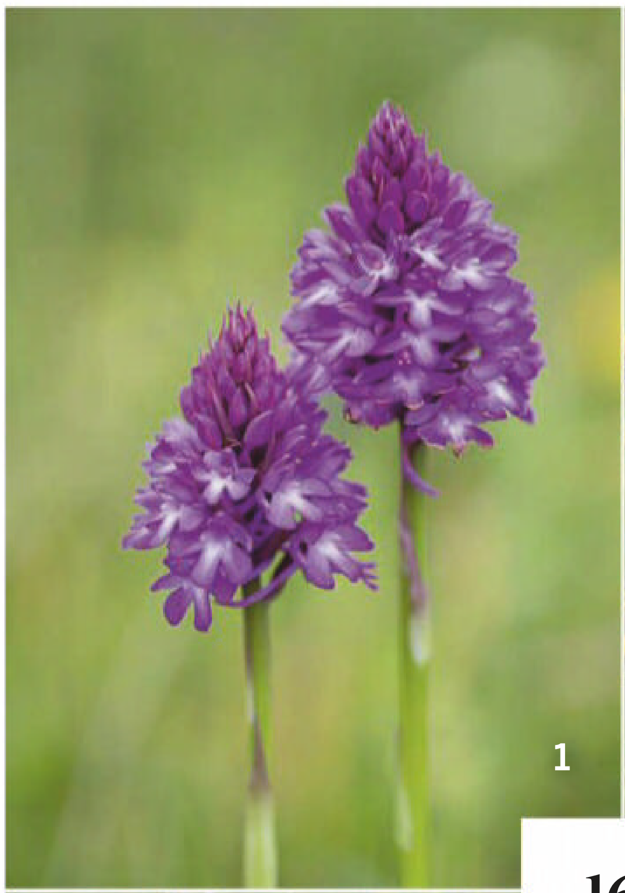
Throughout the summer months a vivid kaleidoscopic patchwork of crops lines the northern flanks of a steep, narrow valley to the north of Bath. This is an unusual working farm grazed by cattle, sheep, and a roaming herd of sedate Shire horses. A mini combine harvester and a bespoke brush harvester parked up in the orchard, its meadow thick with orchids, confirms this as Manor Farm, the West Country hub for Emorsgate Seeds.

The Countryside Survey, which has been published at regular intervals since 1978, is an audit of the natural resources of our ordinary countryside and throws up some alarming indications of rapid loss of biodiversity. In arable landscapes the rapid shift towards unsustainable intensive farming has decimated native hedges. Soils and rivers have been damaged by the heavy use of herbicides and chemical fertilisers. On many upland farms, over-grazing by sheep has created silent, closely cropped expanses totally devoid of wildflowers and wildlife. As a result the margins – hedges, road verges and the banks of streams – have become valuable areas for conservation and habitat restoration. A slow transformation in the ecological management of public and private landscapes over the past 30 years is steadily but positively addressing these concerns, but much restoration depends on the availability of wild seed and the detailed knowledge required for successful after care. Seeds carry the locked in potential to transform the landscape. Choosing to work with, and for, nature can create complex plant communities rich in diversity and full of beauty and colour. Selecting wild native seeds supports wildlife by creating sustainable habitats innately suited to our soils and climate.

Donald MacIntyre, a botanist and farmer with vision and a pioneering spirit, knew this in 1980 when he established Emorsgate Seeds in response to the downward spiral of nature and the countryside. Donald aspired to work for nature, offering seeds naturally suited to specific soil and site conditions and letting the natural cycles and balance of native plant communities maintain a sustainable habitat. Initially the wild seeds he offered were harvested from a one-acre plot in rural Norfolk. The deep and fertile (neutral pH) silt soils, flat fields and low rainfall are ideal for seed production and the business steadily evolved. Conservationist, botanist and seed ▷

This is an unusual working farm grazed by cattle, sheep, and a roaming herd of sedate Shire horses

The diverse meadows grow swiftly during the spring and summer months. The meadow seed is harvested from late July to August for specific seed mixes.



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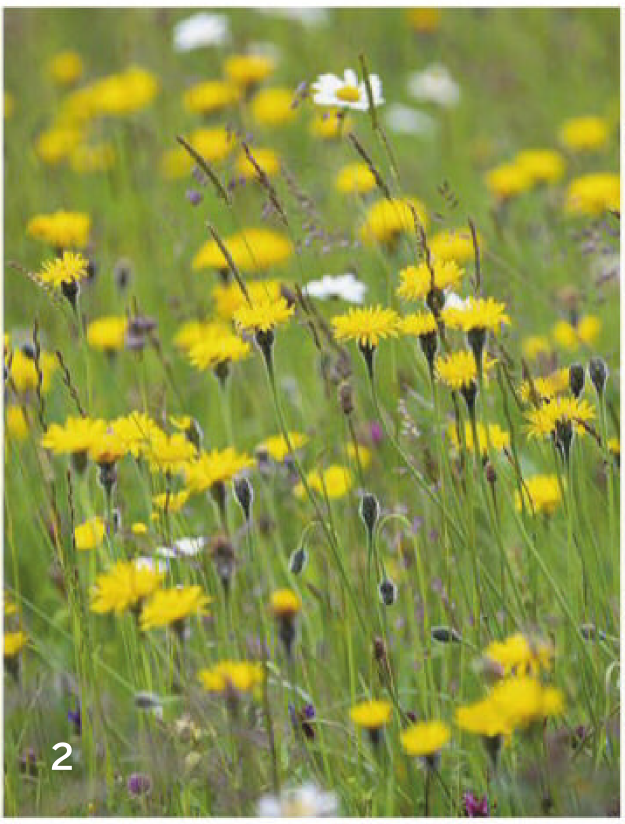

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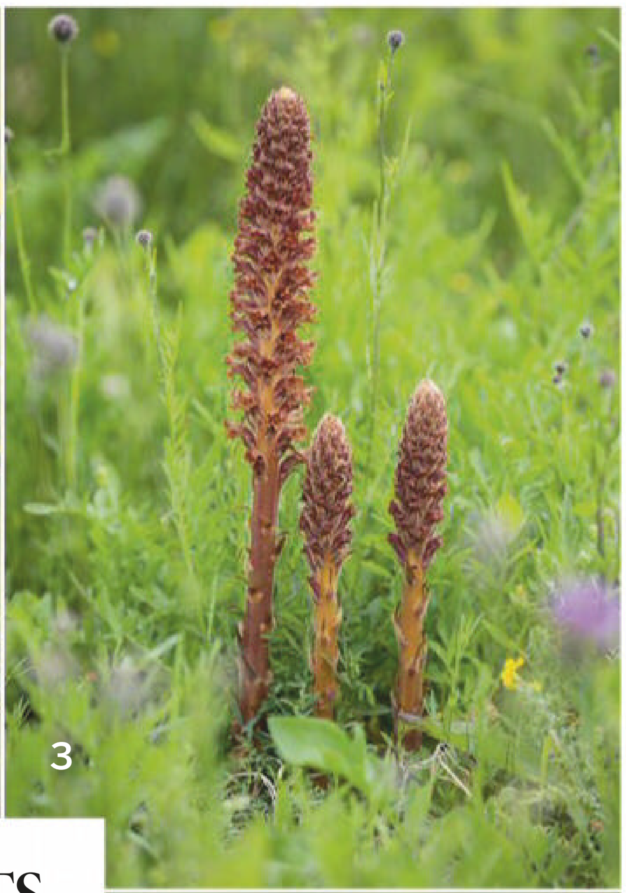

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16 KEY MEADOW PLANTS

1 *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (pyramidal orchid). Once common in old meadows on chalk and limestone slopes, it has narrow unspotted leaves, a dense, brilliant pink flower spike and a musky fragrance attractive to butterflies and moths. 25cm. RHS H5[†].

2 *Leontodon hispidus* (rough hawbit). The leafless stems are very hairy, with the hairs branched into a T or Y shape. 40cm. RHS H5.

3 *Orobanche elatior* (knapweed broomrape). A fleshy perennial parasite that has no need of its own chlorophyll so the whole plant is a honey-yellow, its flowers tinged with purple. 70cm.

4 *Trifolium pratense* (red clover). A common but important species with flowers rich in pollen and nectar. Flowering profusely from late spring into autumn it feeds insects when there is less pollen and nectar for them to forage. 50cm. RHS H7.

5 *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (common spotted orchid). Identified by heavily spotted, broad leaves and a three-lobed flower lip. It is variable, occurring in shades of deep mauve to pale pink with a differing density of darker speckled markings. 60cm. RHS H5.

6 *Silene vulgaris* (bladder campion). At home in woods and hedgerows, its flowers emit a clove- like scent at dusk and the young shoots and roots are delicious in salads. 60cm. RHS H6.

7 *Centaurea nigra* (common knapweed). A long-flowering nectar plant that attracts many pollinators. 75cm. RHS H6.

8 *Cruciata laevipes* (crosswort). Found mostly on lime, this tufted and softly hairy perennial has tiny, fragrant, yellow flowers held in whorled clusters. 60cm.

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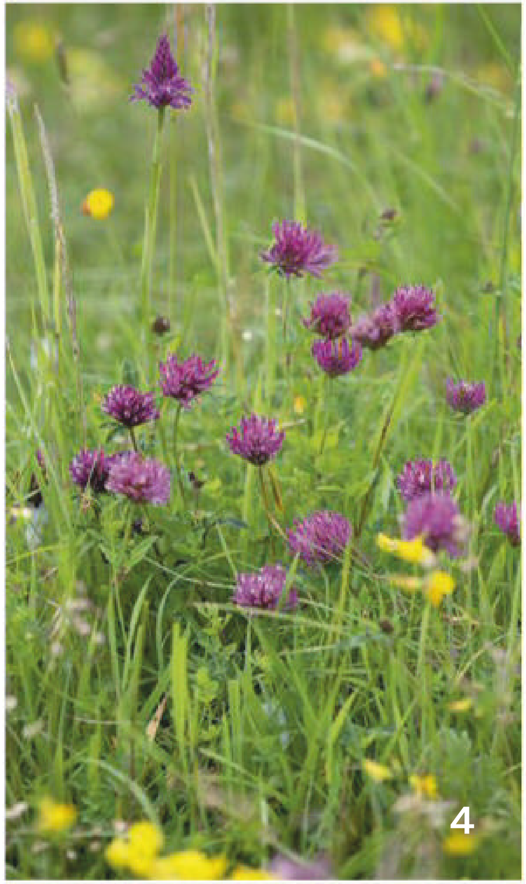

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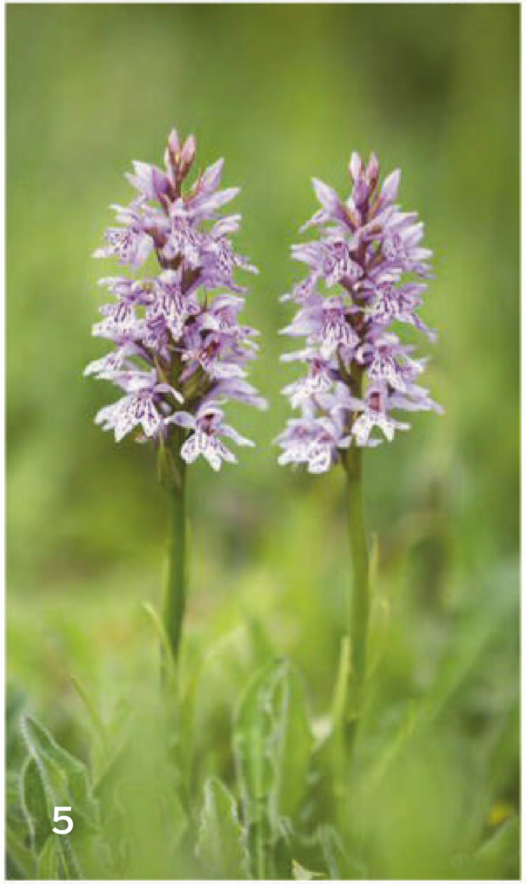

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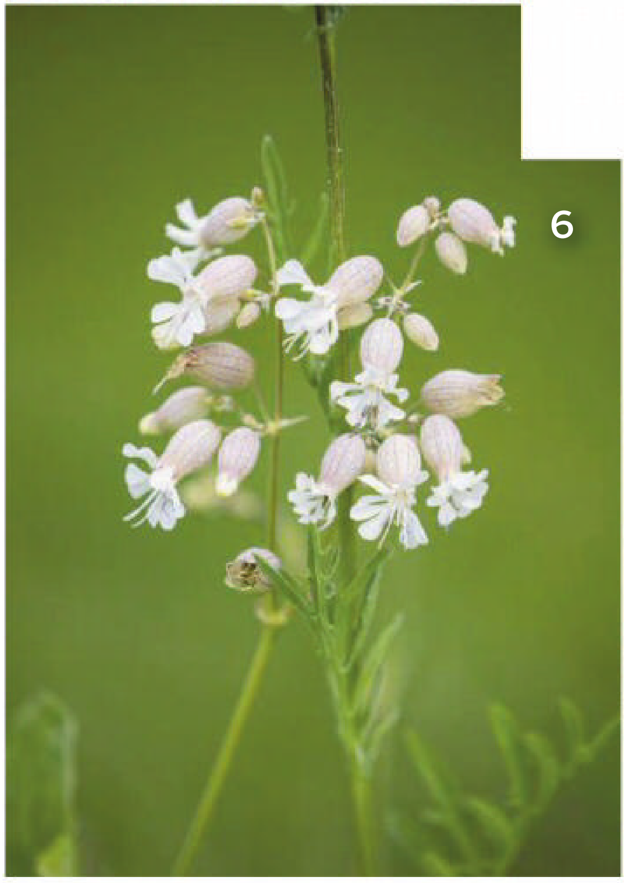

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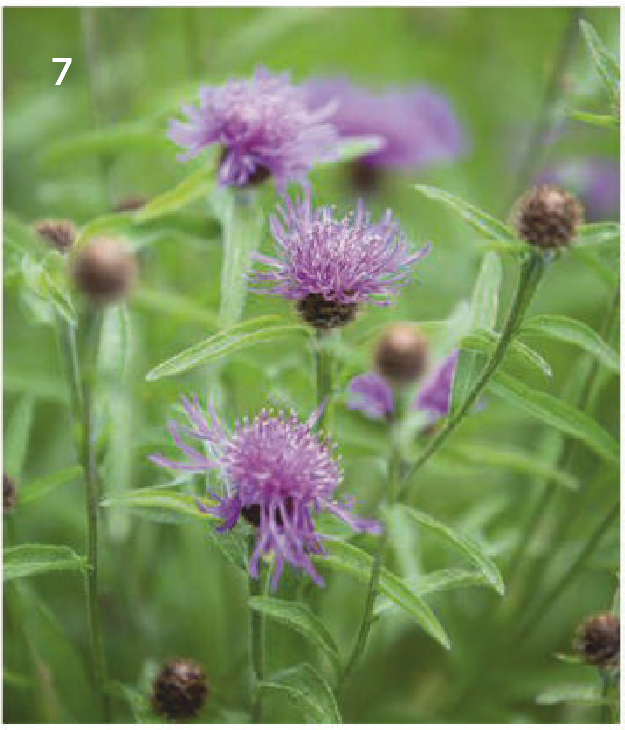

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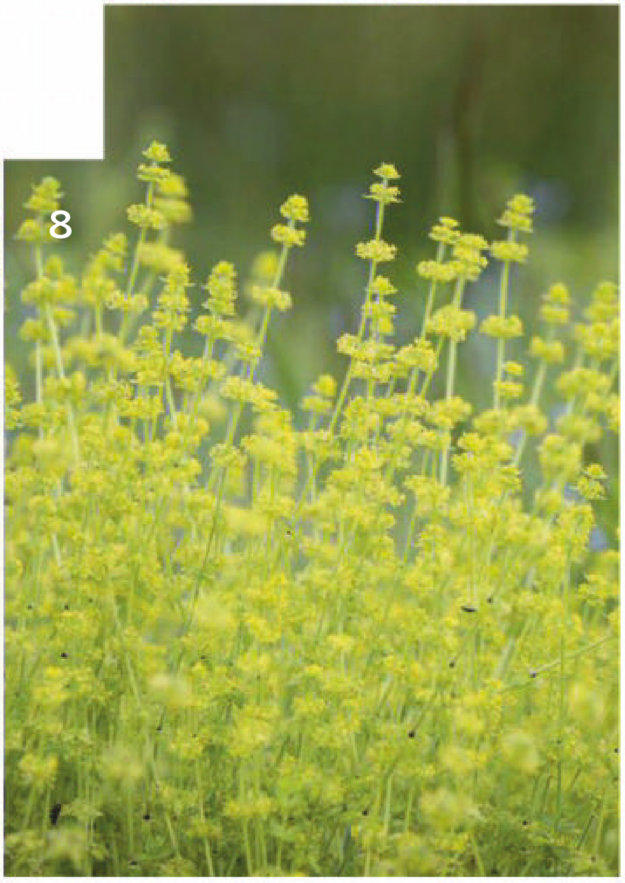

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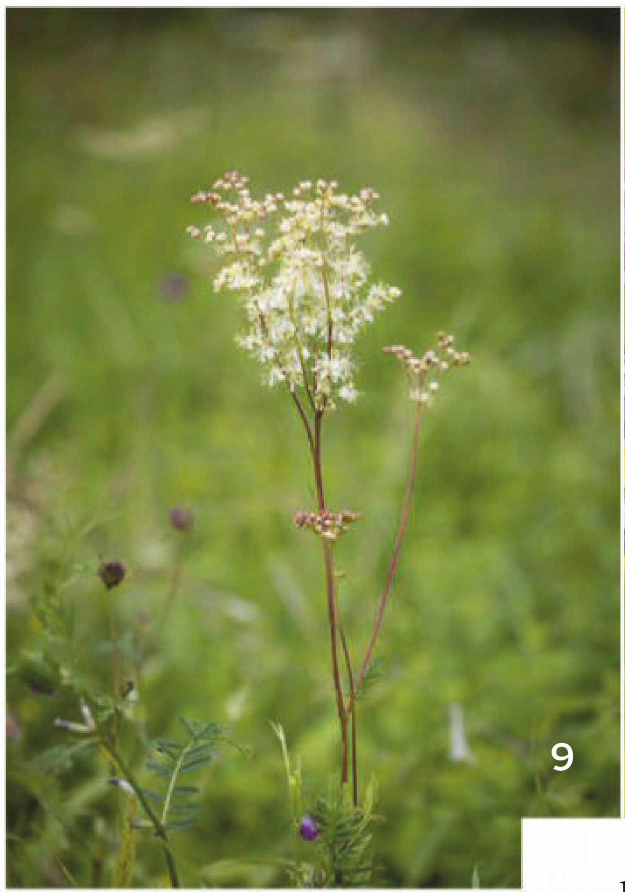
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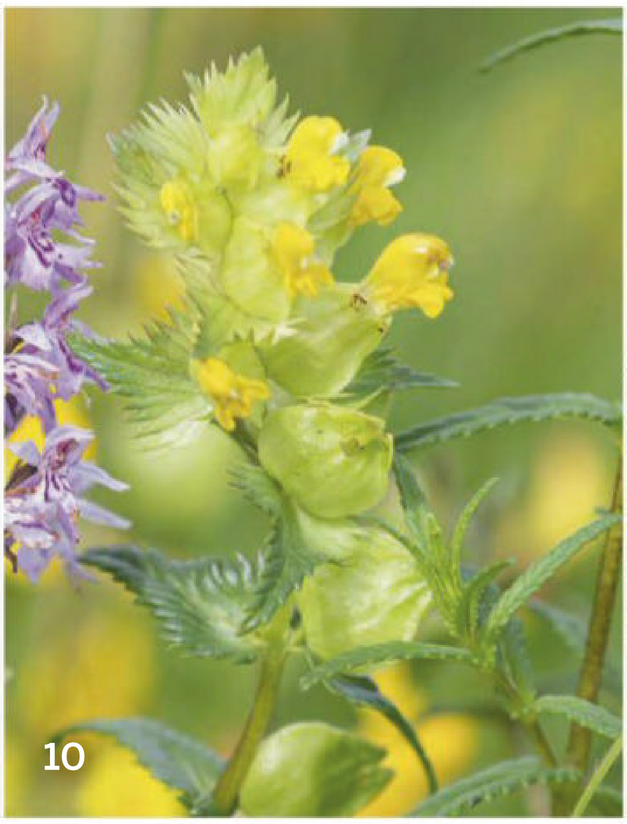
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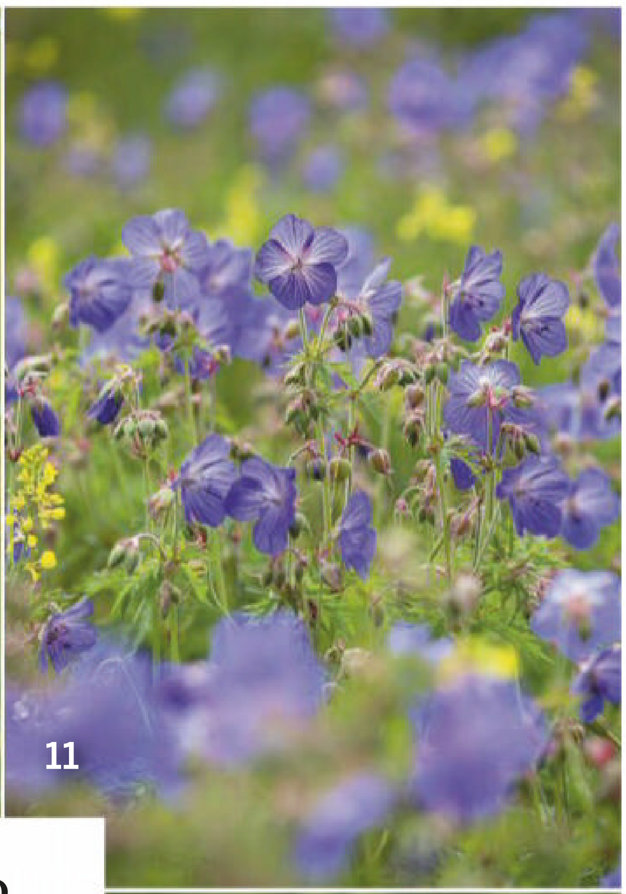
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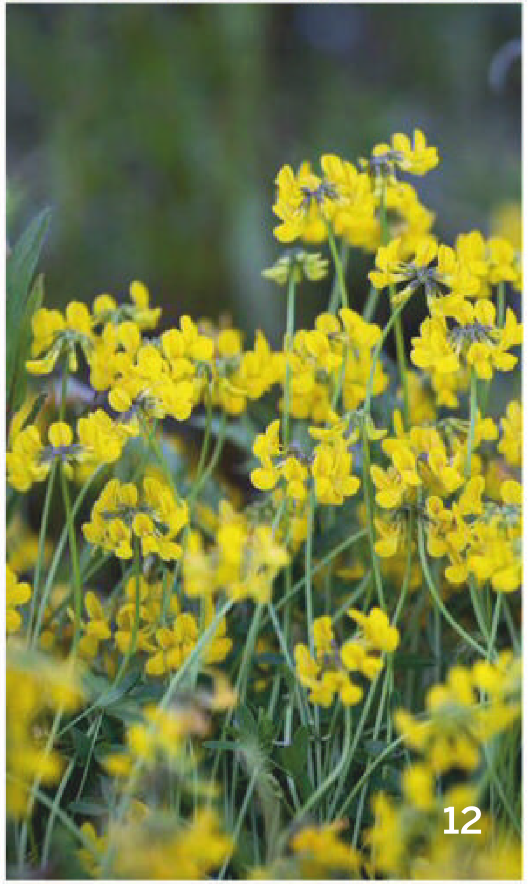
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16 MEADOW PLANTS CONTINUED

9 ***Filipendula vulgaris*** (dropwort). Pinkish buds followed by fluffy cream flowers and fern-like foliage and is more drought tolerant than its relative meadowsweet. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

10 ***Rhinanthus minor*** (yellow rattle). A semi-parasitic annual that piggy backs its nutrition from grasses, weakening their growth and so helping to create a less competitive environment where other perennial wildflowers can establish. Seed should be sown fresh in autumn. 50cm.

11 ***Geranium pratense*** (meadow cranesbill). Often seen growing on Cotswold verges, preferring limestone it also tolerates a neutral pH. Bees gorge on its nectar. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

12 ***Hippocrepis comosa*** (horseshoe vetch). A striking member of the pea family that forms a trailing mat, abundant with golden flowers. 40cm.

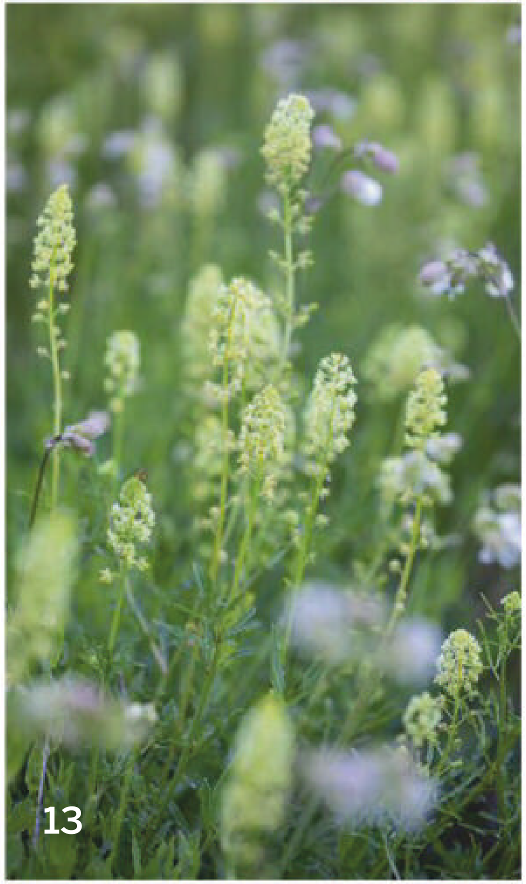
13 ***Reseda lutea*** (wild mignonette). A tall, mildly fragrant biennial that favours well-drained soils and open habitats. Its leaves and pale, greenish-yellow flowers have long been used to create a yellow dye called weld. 75cm.

14 ***Tragopogon pratensis*** (goat's beard or meadow salsify). The yellow flowers of this biennial open at sunrise and close around midday. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

15 ***Briza media*** (quaking grass). A delicate grass that favours well-drained slopes and calcareous soils. 90cm. USDA 4a-8b.

16 ***Ophrys apifera*** (bee orchid). An orchid that occurs on a variety of habitats,including woodland margins and scrub. 30cm.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.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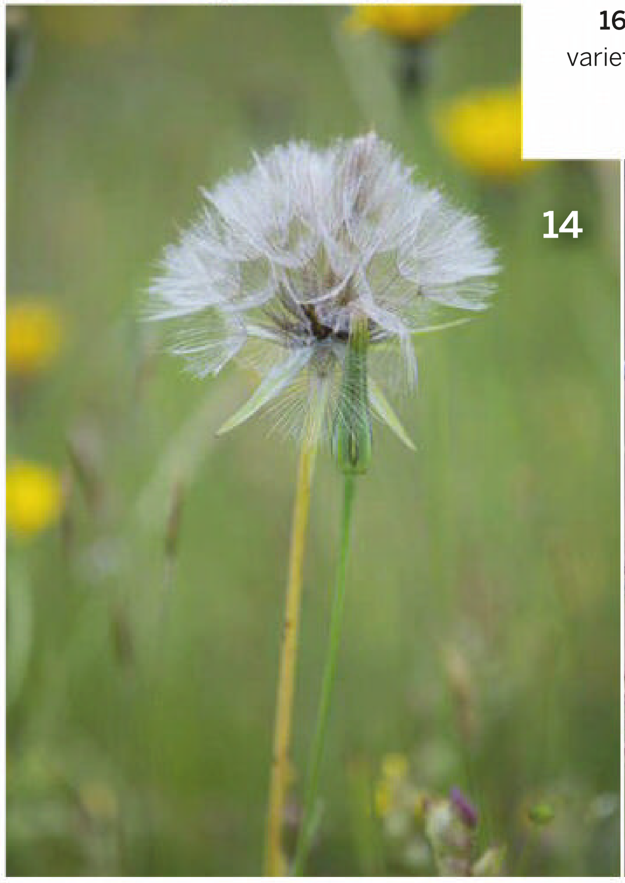
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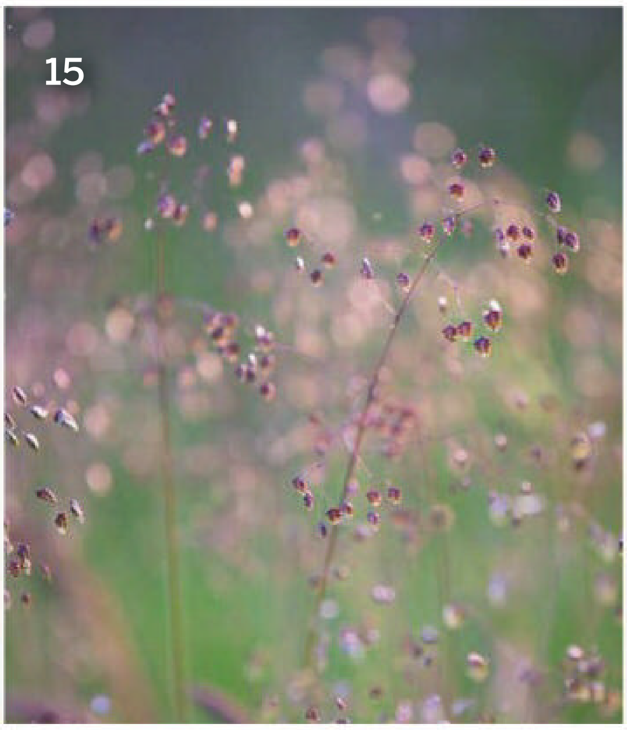
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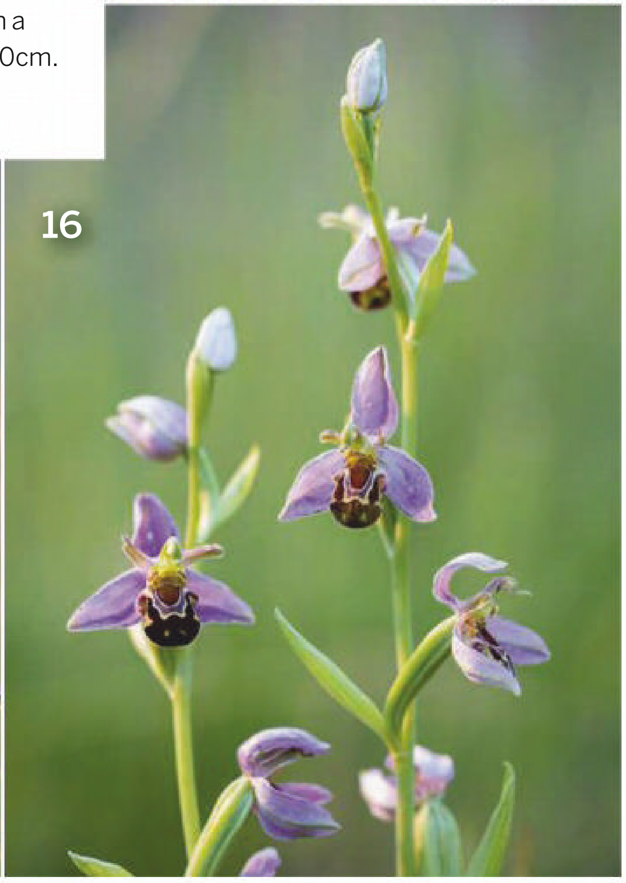
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technologist Richard Brown joined the company in 1990 and currently manages 700 acres of wildflower seed crops in Norfolk where the main office and processing facilities are located. In total Emorsgate now manages 1,000 acres with 750 in arable production for wild seeds.

Conservation projects may require locally sourced seed and Emorsgate will also contract grow seed from donor habitats. The West Country expansion occurred in 1995 when Donald purchased Manor Farm jointly with Jane Lipington. The wet climate and steep banks are not ideal for native seed production but the lime-rich stony soil suits different species and the seed list offered by Emorsgate has duly expanded. The West Country farm holds the philosophy of wilding at its core. This is a progressive approach to conservation that enables nature to rebalance and self manage with reduced human intervention. The philosophy is working for nature, enabling nature to rebalance. The majority of the farmland is semi-natural grassland and woodland managed to support a rich diversity of flora and fauna, with areas of woodland, hedgerows and field margins are respected and managed lightly to encourage an abundance of species. Kew Graduate Jane Lipington joined Emorsgate 25 years ago and together with Donald, Lindsay James and recent conservation graduate Laurie MacIntyre they manage the farm.

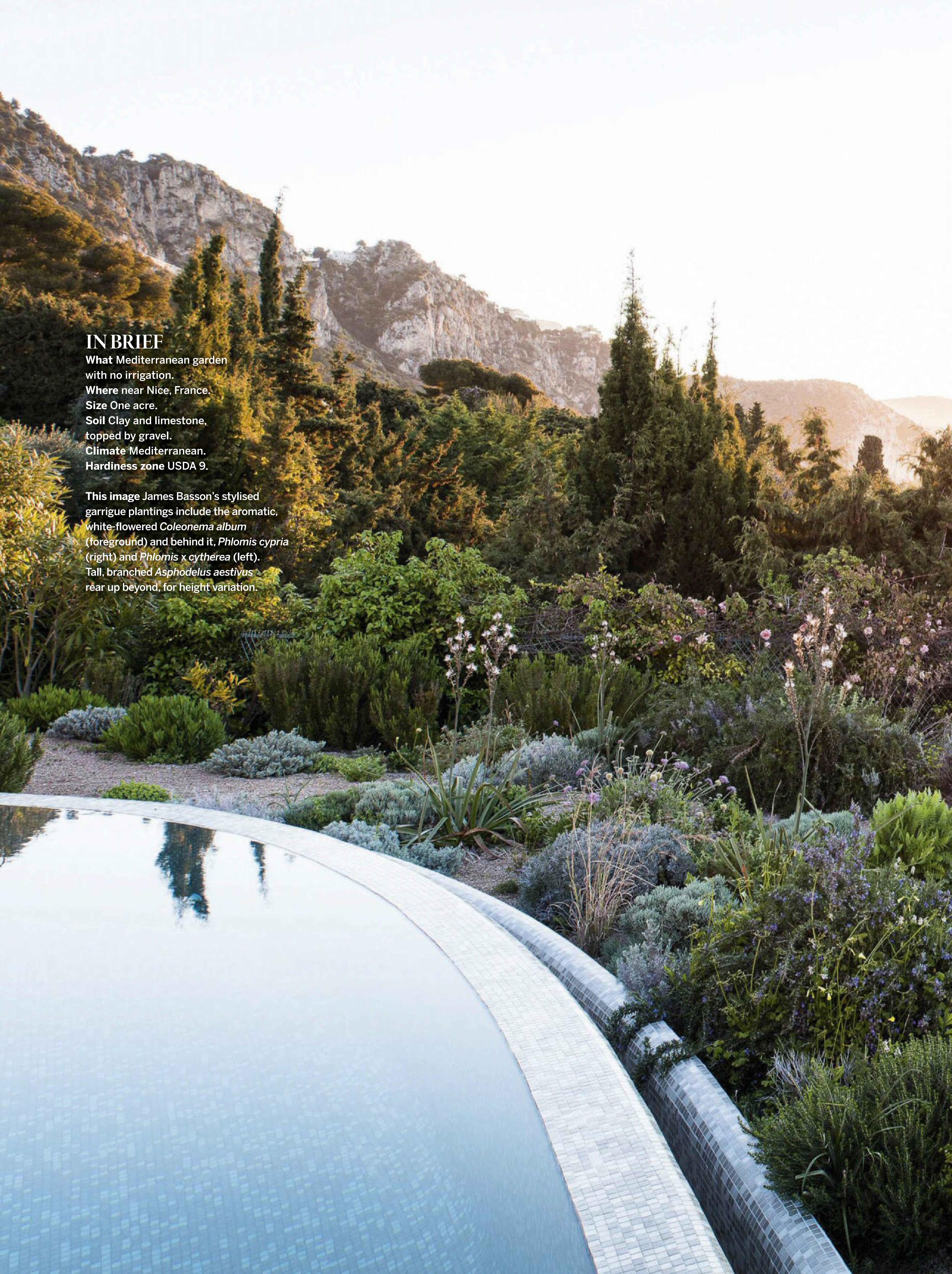
During an inspirational walking tour of the farm one can observe the different stages of grassland restoration and meadow enhancement achieved at Emorsgate. This holistic and sustainable approach is easily applied to gardens. Initially there must be careful consideration of the site, the soil, aspect and dominant species. The ideal time to sow wildflowers and grasses is late summer to early autumn when soil is warm and drought is less likely. Seed should be drilled on the surface or broadcast sown. Wild seed should not be buried as it always requires light to germinate. Many wildflowers and grasses take up to three years to flower during which time careful management is crucial. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Emorsgate Seeds offers a wide range of wildflower seed along with seed mixes grouped by habitat, such as meadow or wetland, and then by soil type so you get the right mix of species for your area. For more information visit **wildseed.co.uk**

> Emorsgate's philosophy is working for nature, enabling nature to rebalance

At Manor Farm the steeply sloping pastures are grazed and, crucially, gently trodden by a herd of 20 Shire horses. The colour palette evolves from early summer when yellows and cool blues are predominant, to the rich purples and orangey reds of autumn.



IN BRIEF

What Mediterranean garden with no irrigation.
Where near Nice, France.
Size One acre.
Soil Clay and limestone, topped by gravel.
Climate Mediterranean.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

This image James Basson's stylised garrigue plantings include the aromatic, white-flowered *Coleonema album* (foreground) and behind it, *Phlomis cypria* (right) and *Phlomis* x *cytherea* (left). Tall, branched *Asphodelus aestivus* rear up beyond, for height variation.

Savoir flair

Guided by his expert knowledge of plants suited to a dry climate, designer James Basson has created a rich and textural garden on the French Riviera

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

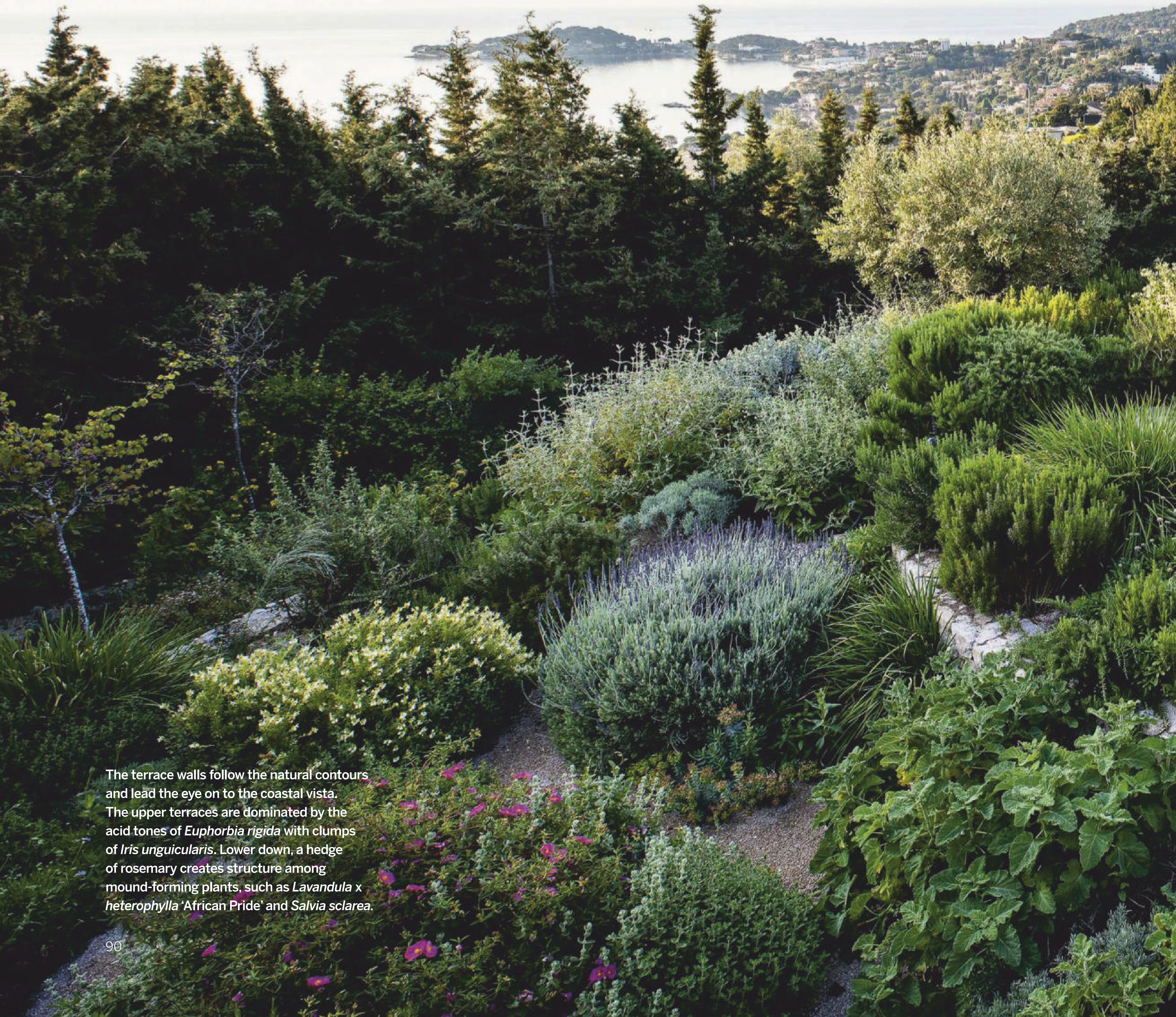
James Basson is a designer best known to British garden-style watchers as the winner of the best in show award at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2017. That is because nearly all of his work to date has been achieved on the French Riviera, where he is based. James and his wife, Helen, moved to the area and set up a practice in 2000, and have very much made it their home. Neither has French lineage, though James spent time during his school holidays in Monaco, where his family had moved when he was 13. Helen plays a key role in the practice, Scape Design, and is equally credited for the work, though it is James who takes the creative and horticultural lead.

At a small private garden in the foothills of the Alpes-Maritime overlooking the coast at Villefranche-sur-Mer near Nice, James has been honing, since 2009, a planting system that is suited to the climate, and which needs no irrigation. He is realistic about its limitations: “In the end you just can’t have flowers if you’re not going to water.” Instead, he has formulated a look inspired by the botanical discoveries of his mentor, Olivier Filippi, the French nurseryman based near Montpellier. “Olivier taught me how to plant a landscape,” James says. “My technical approach is based on the model of his nursery. It means that gardens in this climate can exist for more than just three months of the year.” This is a philosophy of gardening that embraces the idea that the garden will ‘dry out’ in summer.

The garden is divided into two main sections. The first is a triangular area that slopes away from the swimming-pool terrace, with views past a fringe of pines, towards Beaulieu-sur-Mer and Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. This space is planted with mainly low-growing plants in approximate bands of green and silver foliage. The second area is discovered well below terrace level on the other side of the pool, shaded by mature trees, and is quieter in tone, with larger shrubs and small trees playing a role. Gravel paths and limestone steps enhance the relaxed feel throughout.

In the more open, triangular space, certain plants have been allowed to dominate and play a key role: phlomis and salvias in a range of species; *Teucrium flavum* and *Teucrium chamaedrys*; *Lavandula* x *heterophylla*; santolinas, helichrysums and ▷

To continue turn to page 94

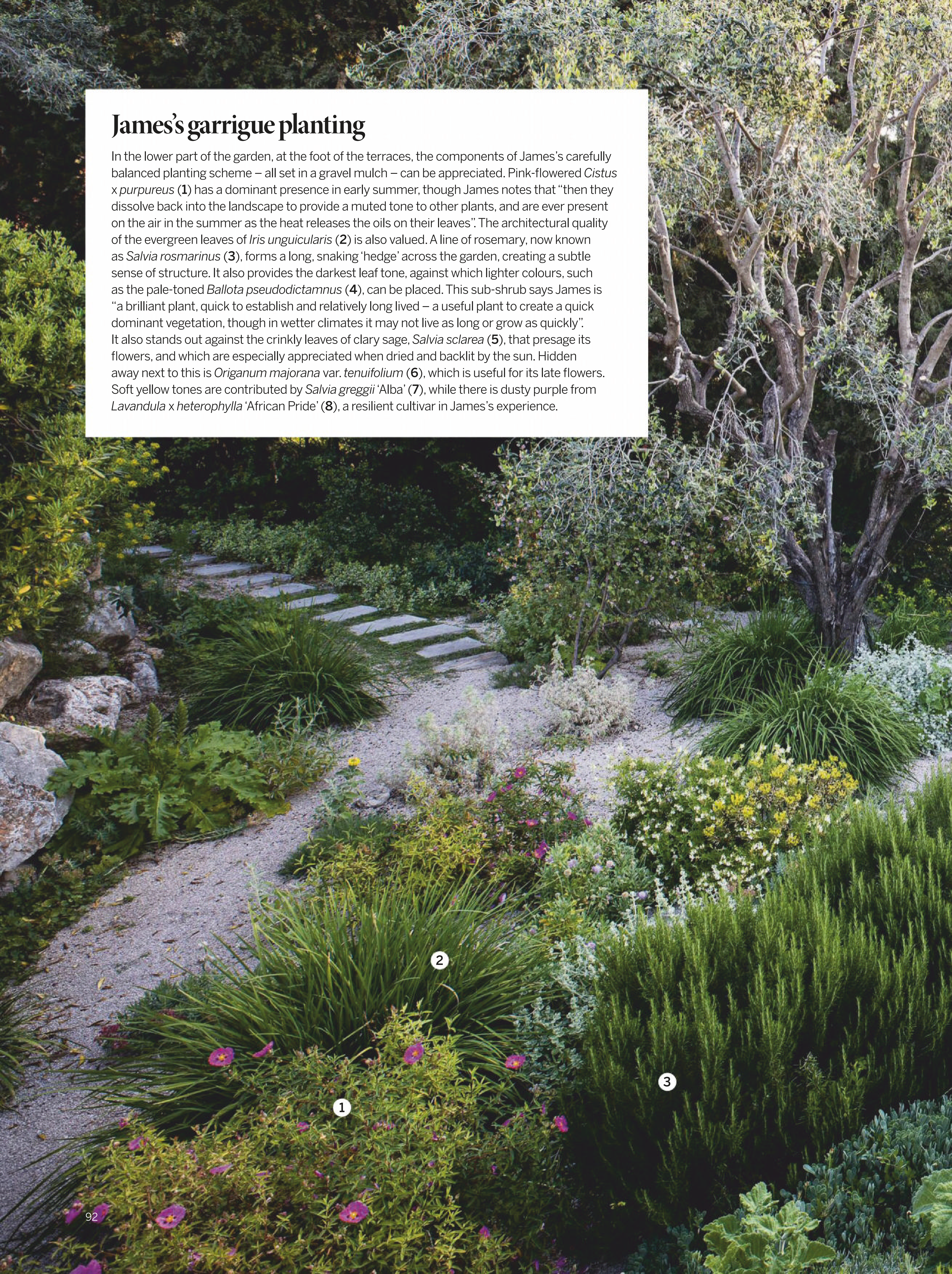


The terrace walls follow the natural contours and lead the eye on to the coastal vista. The upper terraces are dominated by the acid tones of *Euphorbia rigida* with clumps of *Iris unguicularis*. Lower down, a hedge of rosemary creates structure among mound-forming plants, such as *Lavandula* x *heterophylla* ‘African Pride’ and *Salvia sclarea*.

Olivier taught me how to plant a landscape. My technical approach is based on the model of his nursery

James's garrigue planting

In the lower part of the garden, at the foot of the terraces, the components of James's carefully balanced planting scheme – all set in a gravel mulch – can be appreciated. Pink-flowered *Cistus* x *purpureus* (**1**) has a dominant presence in early summer, though James notes that "then they dissolve back into the landscape to provide a muted tone to other plants, and are ever present on the air in the summer as the heat releases the oils on their leaves". The architectural quality of the evergreen leaves of *Iris unguicularis* (**2**) is also valued. A line of rosemary, now known as *Salvia rosmarinus* (**3**), forms a long, snaking 'hedge' across the garden, creating a subtle sense of structure. It also provides the darkest leaf tone, against which lighter colours, such as the pale-toned *Ballota pseudodictamnus* (**4**), can be placed. This sub-shrub says James is "a brilliant plant, quick to establish and relatively long lived – a useful plant to create a quick dominant vegetation, though in wetter climates it may not live as long or grow as quickly". It also stands out against the crinkly leaves of clary sage, *Salvia sclarea* (**5**), that presage its flowers, and which are especially appreciated when dried and backlit by the sun. Hidden away next to this is *Origanum majorana* var. *tenuifolium* (**6**), which is useful for its late flowers. Soft yellow tones are contributed by *Salvia greggii* 'Alba' (**7**), while there is dusty purple from *Lavandula* x *heterophylla* 'African Pride' (**8**), a resilient cultivar in James's experience.



We have learned a lot about plants that can create a happy competitive balance

▷ rosemary. James's strategy is for 70 per cent of the garden to be made up of around half a dozen dominant species. "We have learned a lot about plants that can create a happy competitive balance," he says.

James is refreshingly candid about the experimental nature of his approach. This was one of his first designed gardens and to begin with, he says, he packed it with too many different species. "It didn't really work because the speed of growth of different plants was so variable," he says. "Cistus is slow, for example, while phlomis grows really fast. After five years, the garden really started to go downhill. It had been over-maintained, with too many young plants taken out, and then pruned at the wrong time of year. Mediterranean gardens just die out if you don't let them self-seed."

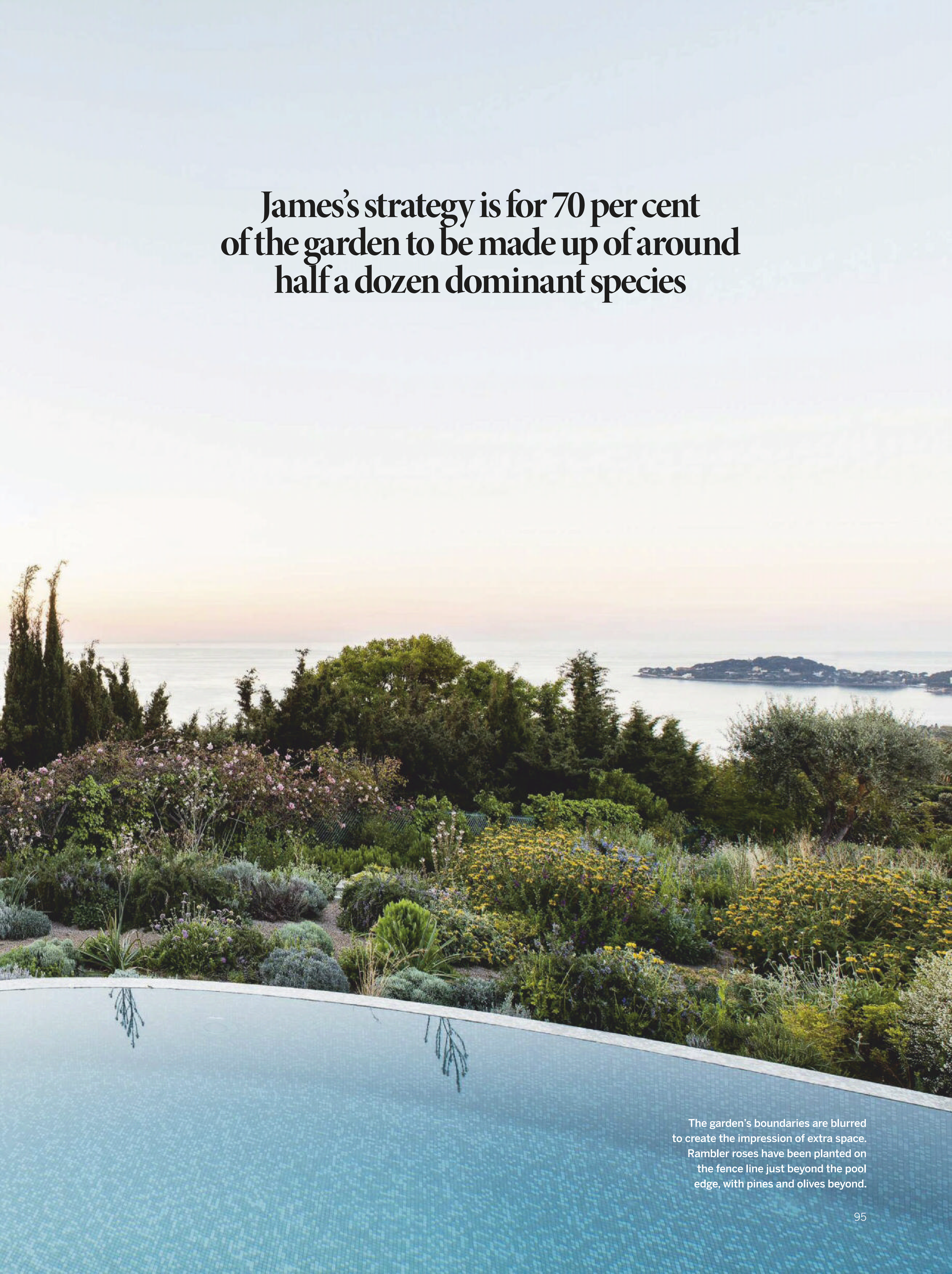
James has concluded that the correct technique is to observe what is germinating, and when, and then to make positive decisions as to what to keep and what to lose – not just to chop things down in a more general seasonal way. Since this is a matter of maintenance more than design, he has established a system where he ensures his gardens are looked after by a trusted team of four 'artist-gardeners', who work across his portfolio. "There are probably too many new gardens being designed," he contends. "Maybe designers should be placing more emphasis on looking after their work."

In the lower part of this garden, James again seeks a happy balance between the plants, this time in somewhat quieter style. Here, there are olives and larger shrubs, such as *Retama raetam*, a white-flowered broom native to North Africa and parts of the Middle East, as well as the splayed form of self-seeding *Euphorbia rigida*. Teucriums again play an important role, with the addition of *T. hircanicum*, its stately purple spires giving it the appearance of a Mediterranean foxglove.

James agrees the planting style has a slightly chaotic appearance that is less well-defined than typical New Perennial style naturalistic planting, with a texture that is attractively 'lumpy' as opposed to 'drifty'. It could be described as a small-scale, intensified garrigue planting, and is perhaps evidence that this kind of approach can indeed work on a smaller scale. This may be a relatively small garden but its planting is possessed of great character because of its sheer intensity. ☐

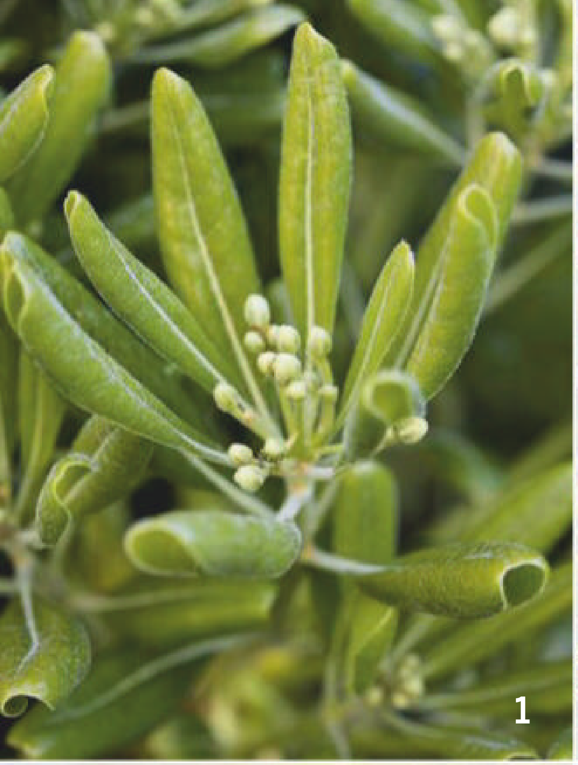
USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Scape Design's work at **scapedesign.com/en**

Turn the page for 12 of James's key plants



James's strategy is for 70 per cent of the garden to be made up of around half a dozen dominant species

The garden's boundaries are blurred to create the impression of extra space. Rambler roses have been planted on the fence line just beyond the pool edge, with pines and olives beyond.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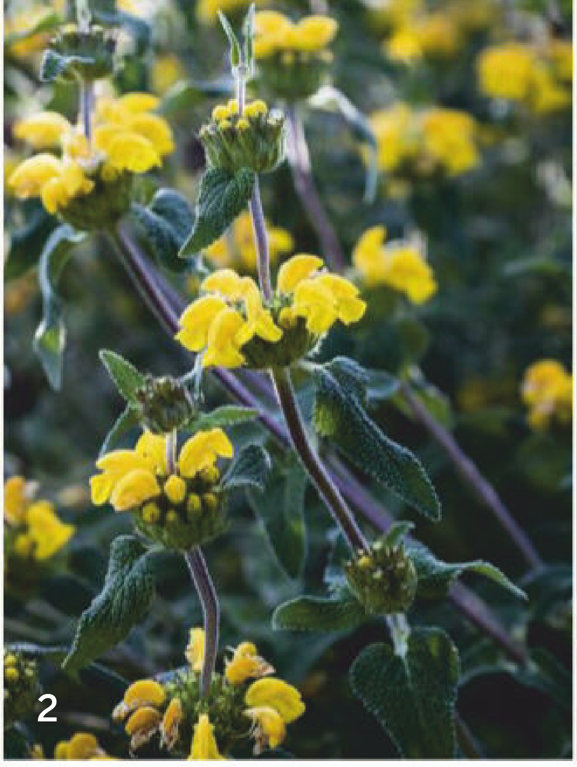
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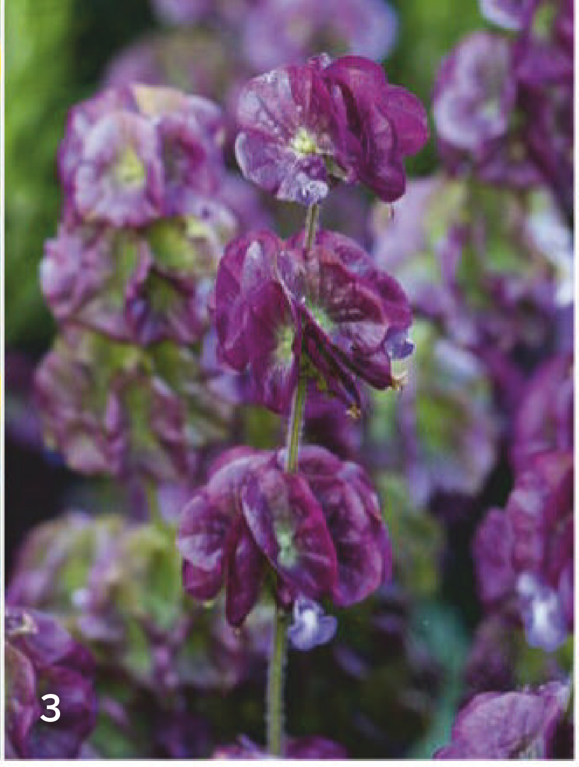
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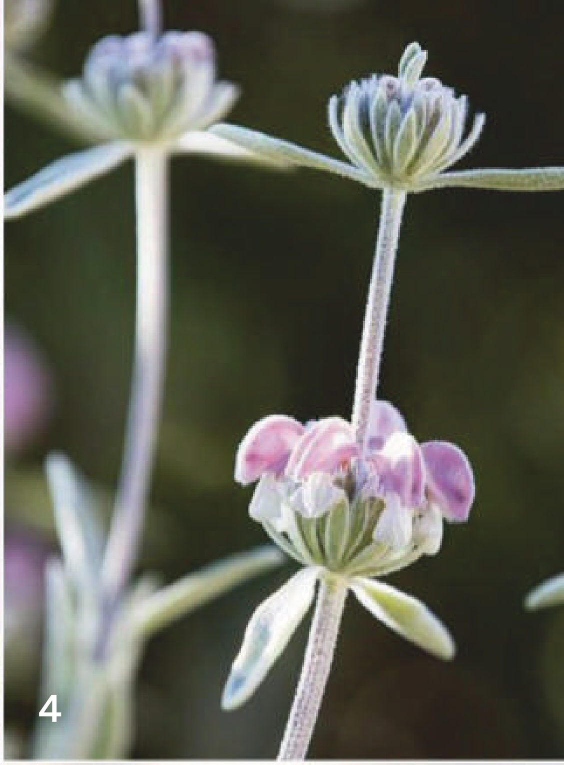
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Pittosporum tobira*
Although this evergreen shrub has become a familiar plant, it is in James's opinion too often overlooked for its mature cloud-form shape and exquisite peppery jasmine scent. 4.5m. AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b†.

2 *Phlomis viscosa*
A phlomis with leaves that are darker than most. Its large flowers almost form yellow pompoms. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Salvia multicaulis*
"Our absolute favourite of 2019," says James. A low-growing shrub with long-lasting dried flowerheads and a gentle approach to its neighbours. 10cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Phlomis purpurea* 'Torcal de Antequera'
A phlomis that James finds really reliable with pale-pink flowers as opposed to the typically darker pink flowers of this species. 1.2m.

5 *Anisodontea malvastroides*
This pale-flowered Cape mallow is tall, light, pink, airy and short-lived. 2m.

6 *Euphorbia rigida*
An upright spurge with bright-yellow flowers in early summer, although it is a very successful self-seeder with the danger of escape to the wild. 60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 7a-10b.

7 *Teucrium fruticans*
This reliable, evergreen shrub with pale-blue flowers is long-lived, long-flowering and adds a silver tone to the garden – and is one that James finds hard not to use. However, it can quickly develop a shaggy look, so demands regular attention. 1m. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b.

8 *Teucrium flavum*
An evergreen shrub that James describes as "an absolute winner". It is good in both sun and shade, a happy companion among others. It bears brilliant fresh-green leaves at just the right height. The flowers are a moon-pale yellow. 30cm. USDA 7a-9b.

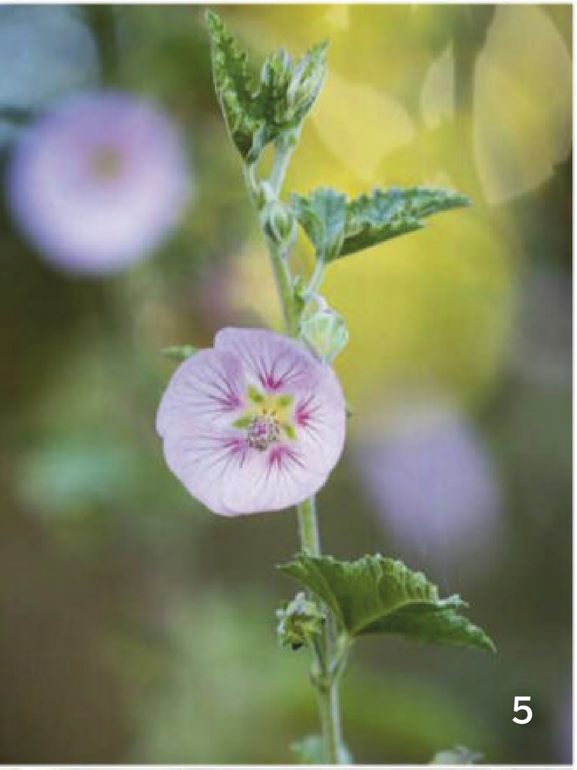
9 *Salvia aurea*
A shrubby evergreen perennial from southern Africa that adds a splash of highly original colour to the garden, and seems quite at home in the Provençal landscape. 1.5m.

10 *Helichrysum italicum* subsp. *microphyllum* 'Lefka Ori'
This small-leaved curry plant creates a reliable cascading groundcover. In this garden it is doing well in the bright shade of an olive tree. 15cm.

11 *Centaurea bella*
A slow but remarkable groundcover cushion. "I love a flower that floats," says James. 25cm.

12 *Fumaria bicolor*
Here a short-lived annual, but not a bully, so a welcome invader of empty space. 50cm.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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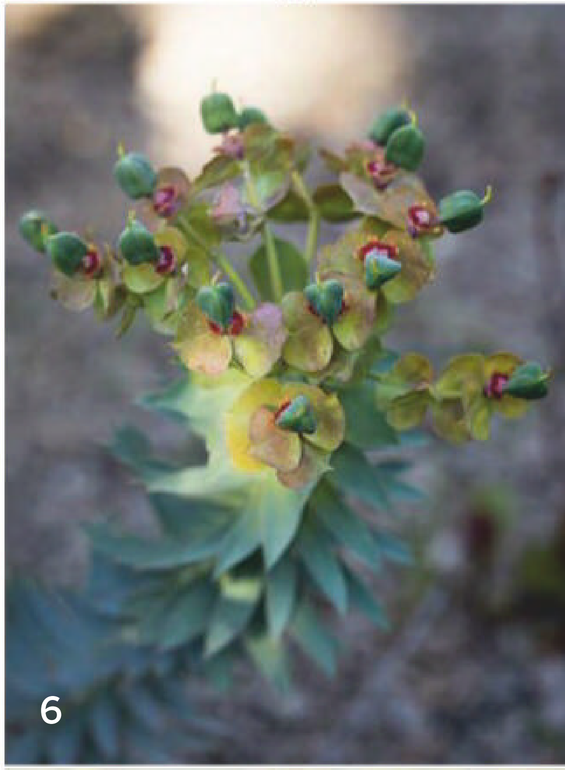
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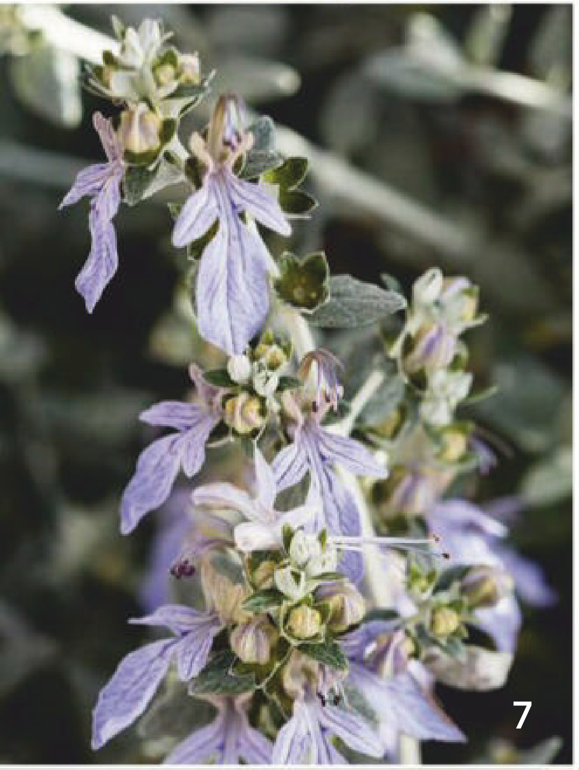
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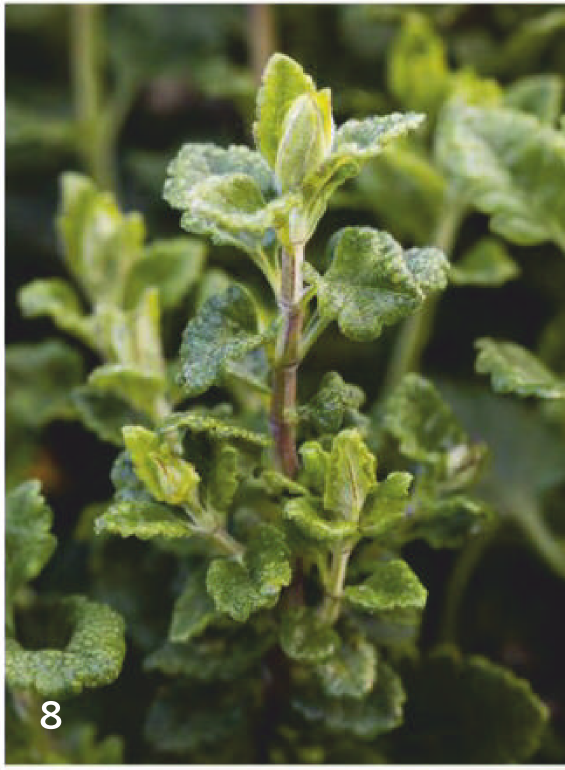
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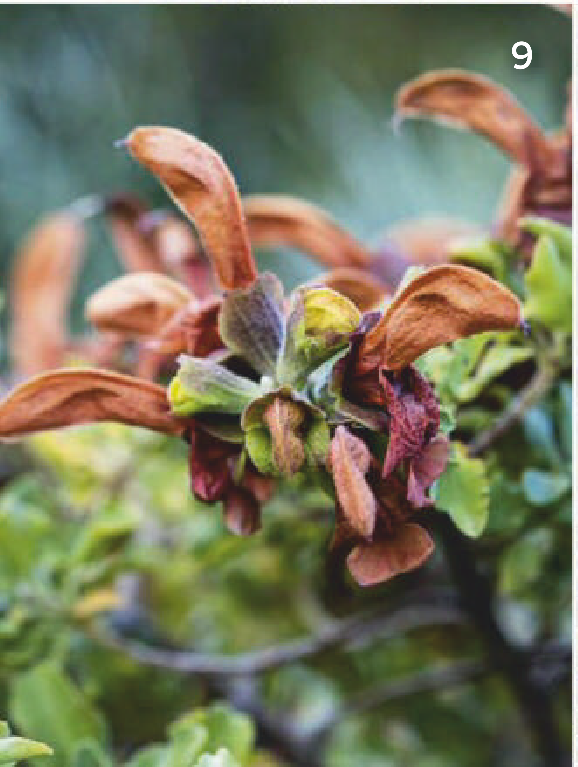
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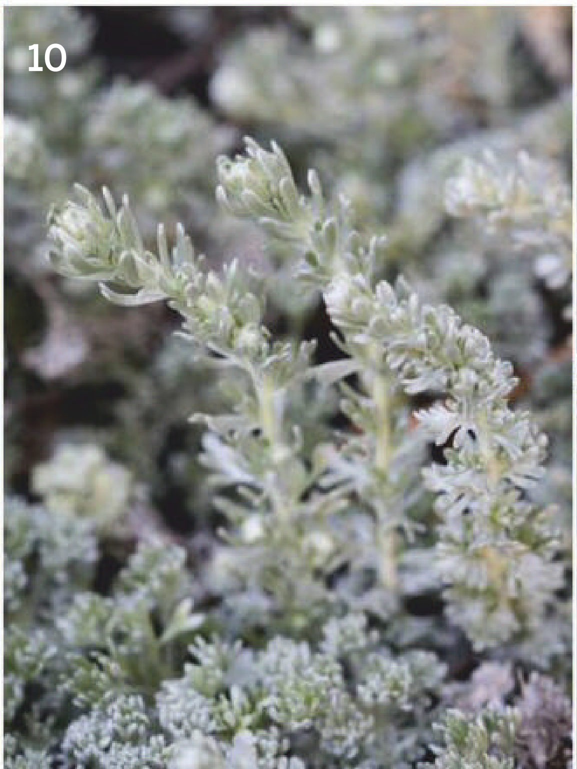
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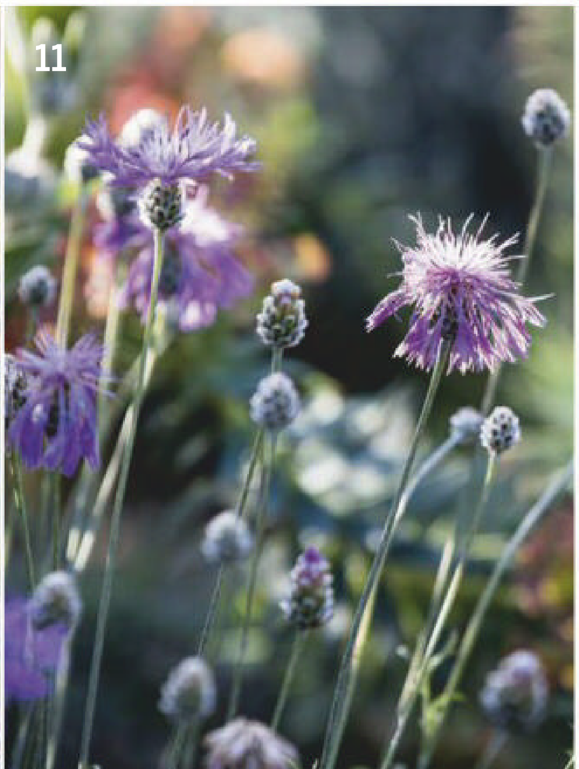
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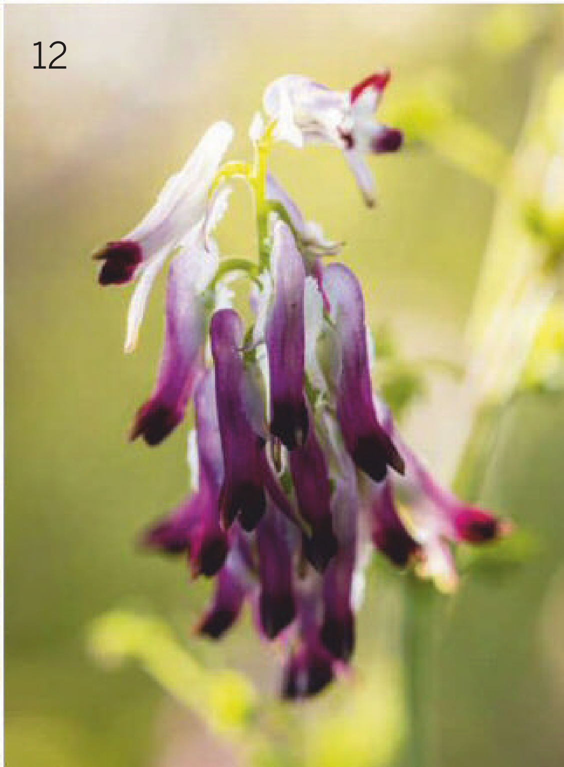
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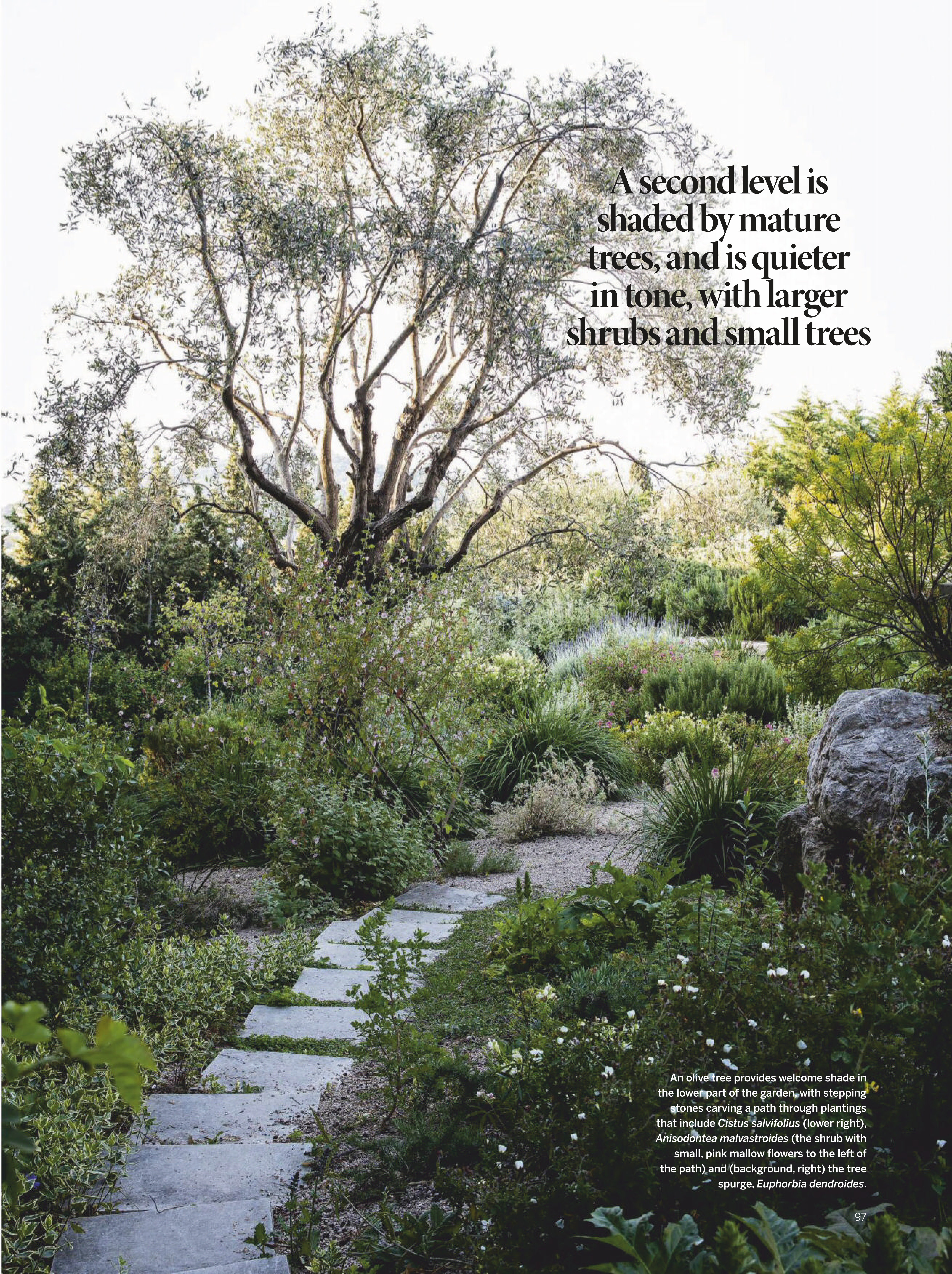
A second level is shaded by mature trees, and is quieter in tone, with larger shrubs and small trees



An olive tree provides welcome shade in the lower part of the garden, with stepping stones carving a path through plantings that include *Cistus salvifolius* (lower right), *Anisodontea malvastroides* (the shrub with small, pink mallow flowers to the left of the path) and (background, right) the tree spurge, *Euphorbia dendroides*.

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Design

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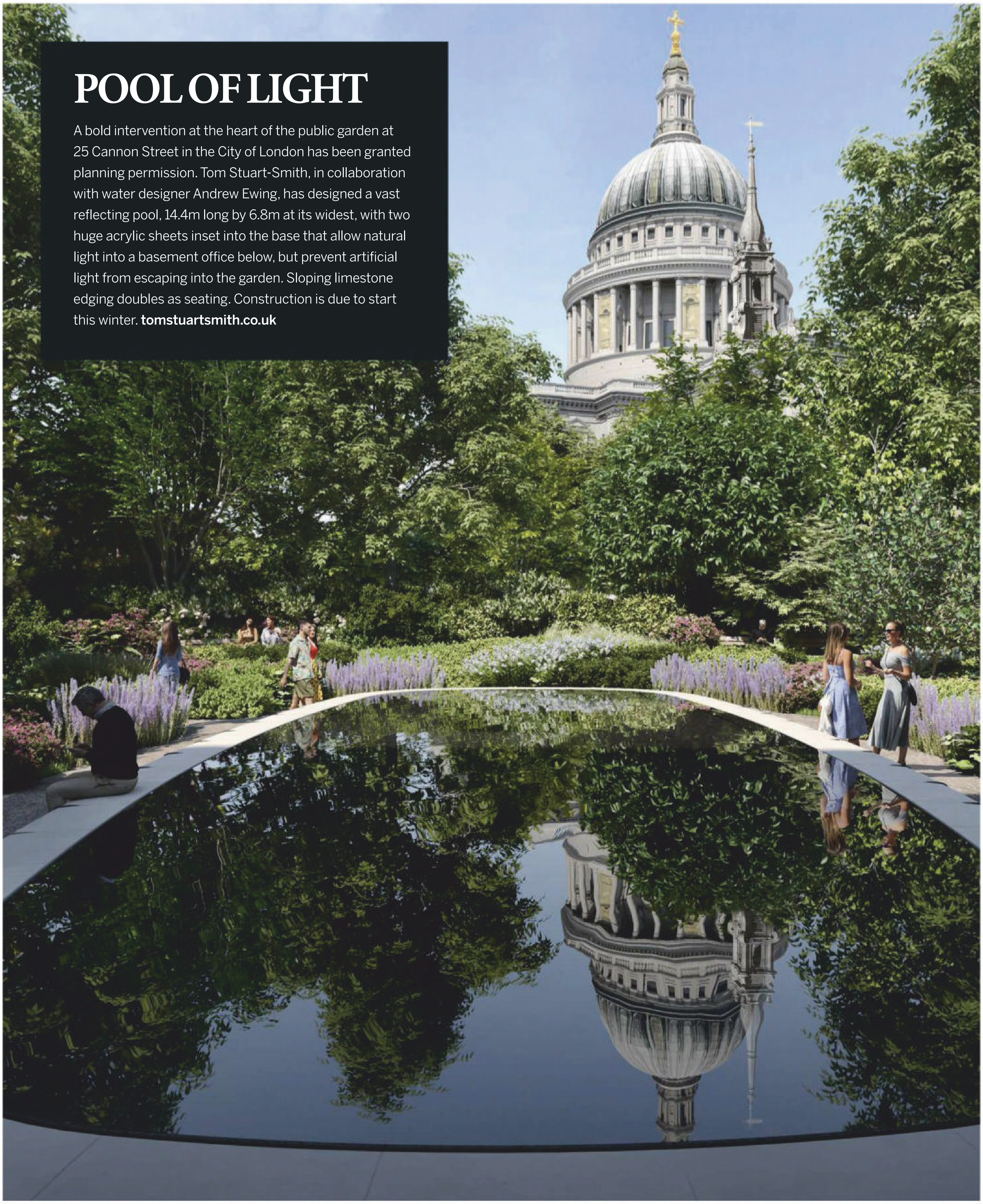
POOL OF LIGHT

A bold intervention at the heart of the public garden at 25 Cannon Street in the City of London has been granted planning permission. Tom Stuart-Smith, in collaboration with water designer Andrew Ewing, has designed a vast reflecting pool, 14.4m long by 6.8m at its widest, with two huge acrylic sheets inset into the base that allow natural light into a basement office below, but prevent artificial light from escaping into the garden. Sloping limestone edging doubles as seating. Construction is due to start this winter. **tomstuartsmith.co.uk**



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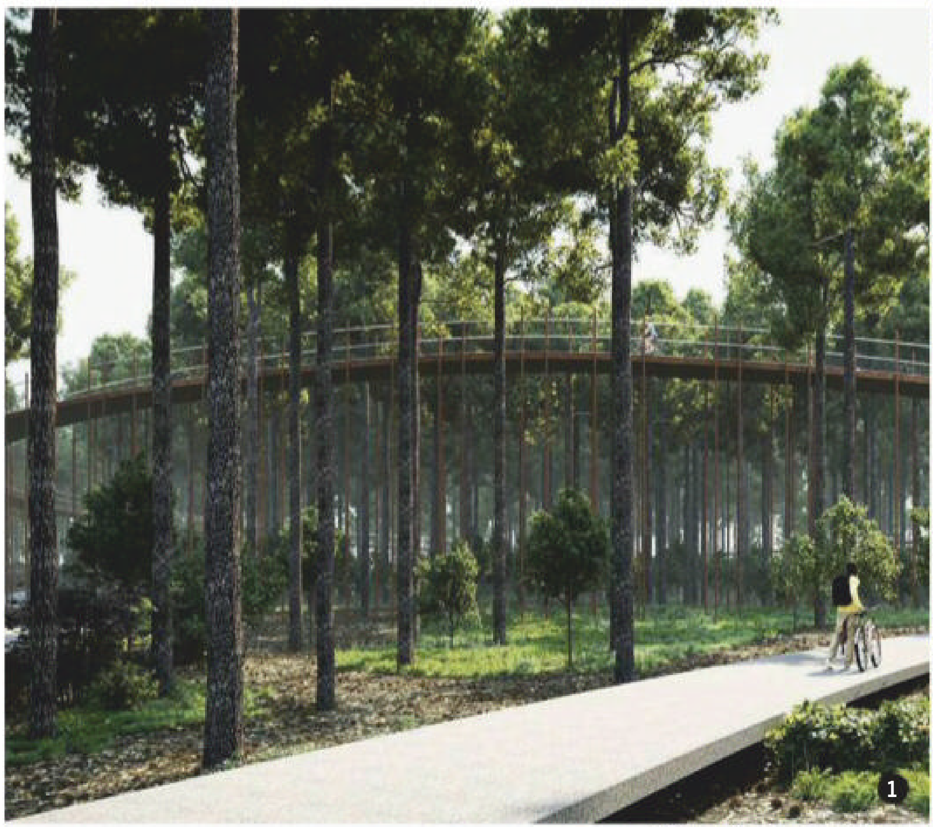
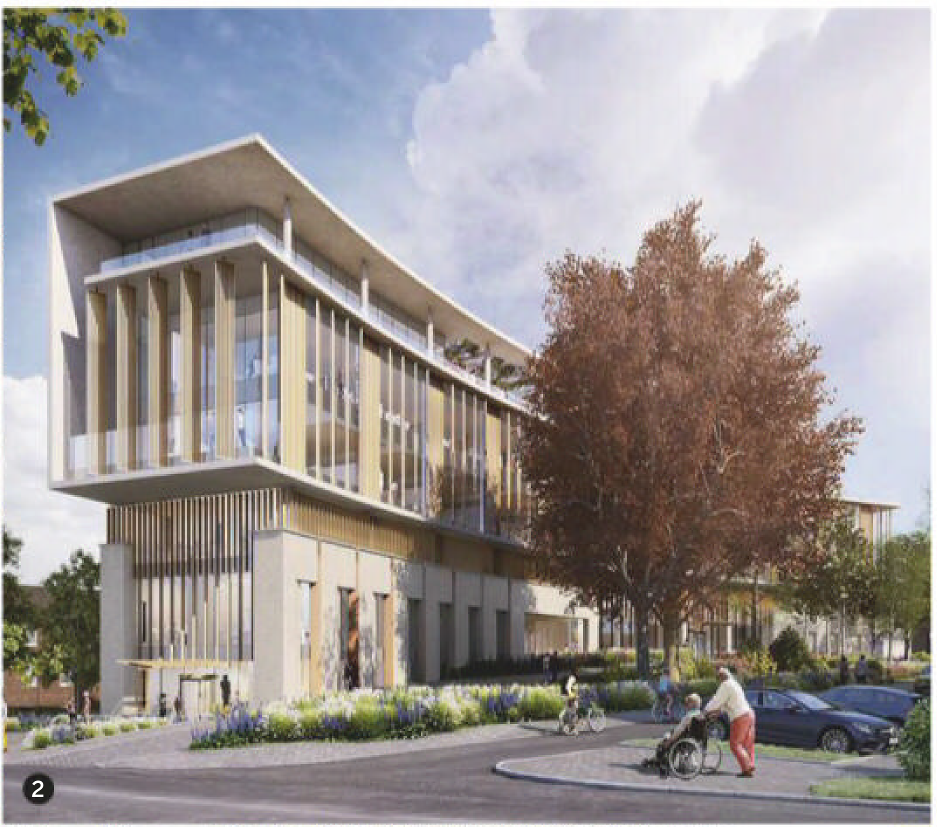
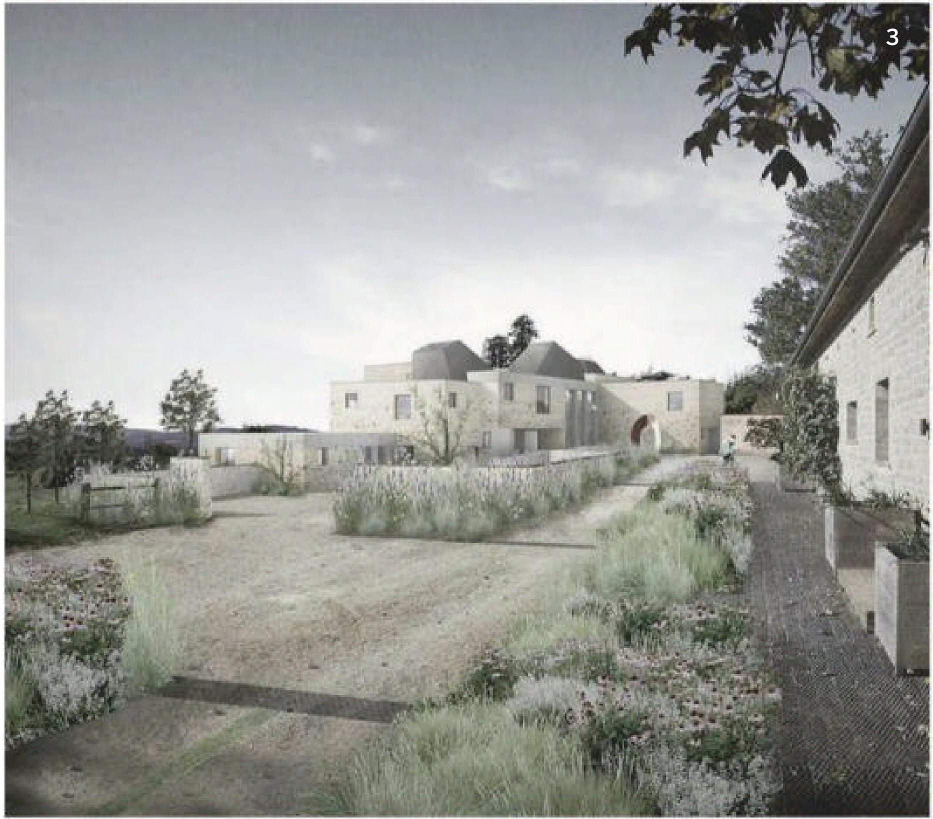
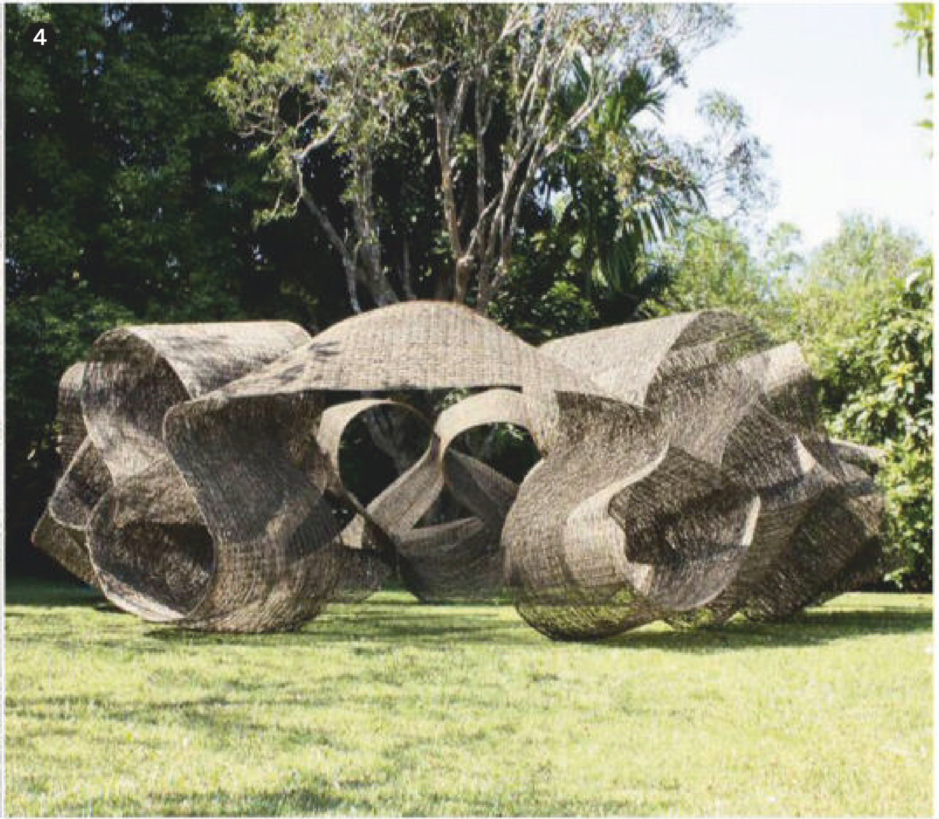








① CYCLING THROUGH THE TREES

An elevated section has been added to the Limburg cycle route at Hechtel-Eksel, Belgium, to provide cyclists with an immersive experience through the treetops in Pijnven forest. The two-tier bridge, which forms two circles, suggestive of tree rings, is 700m long and gradually rises to a height of 10m. It is supported on Corten steel columns that mimic the trunks of the surrounding pine trees. Designed by architects De Gregorio & Partners, with landscape architects Burolandschap, for Visit Limburg, it won gold for Architecture in the International Design Awards 2019 in Los Angeles. **burolandschap.net**

② OAK CANCER CENTRE

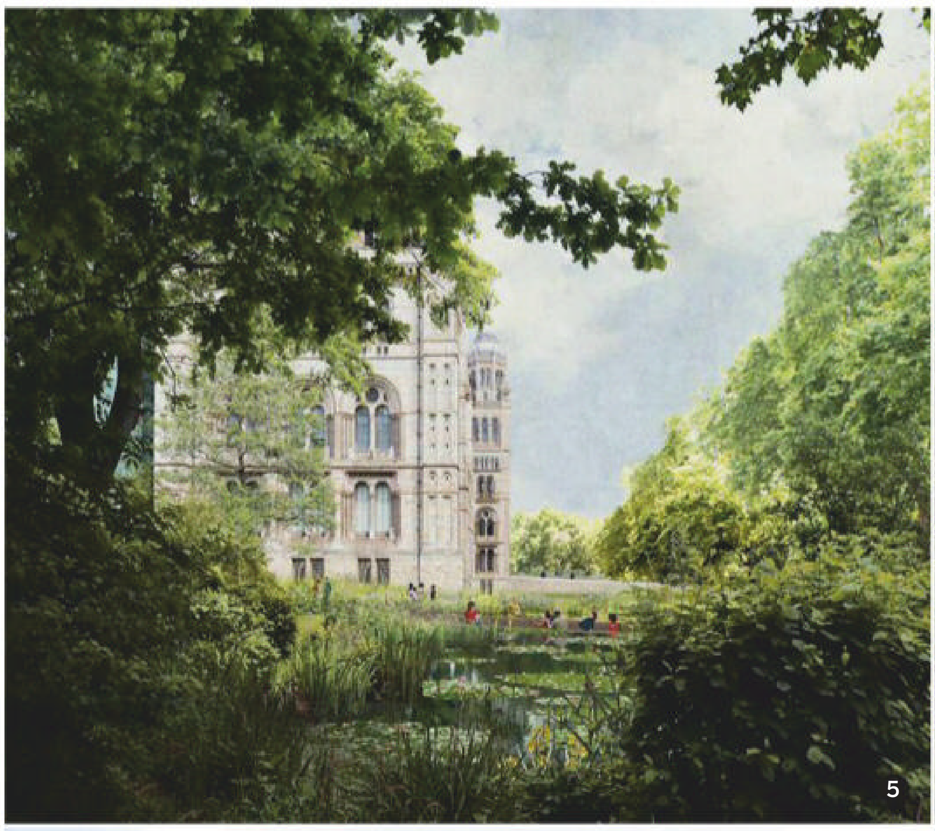
A new treatment and research centre at Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton, in Surrey, has been given the green light. Designed by BDP architects as a series of peaceful spaces with access to natural light, the six-storey building has a westerly orientation towards the landscaped gardens. A deep elliptical border, following the curve of the building, will be planted with drifts of trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials to provide year-round interest. Some of the plants used by Piet Oudolf in the garden he designed for the nearby Royal Marsden Maggie's Centre will be included in the mix. **bdp.com**

③ NEW HOUSE FOR HISTORIC SITE

Planning permission has been granted for a contemporary house, with gardens by Marian Boswall Landscape Architects on the site of the former home of Victorian horticulturist Lady Dorothy Nevill. Designed by Miranda Montagu architects with Invisible Studio, the house will overlook a valley in the South Downs National Park. The landscape design, which references the undulating landform of the Downs, will include miscanthus, pennisetum and wildflowers, with vertical accents from multi-stem trees to help ground the house in the landscape. **marianboswall.com**

④ KENGO KUMA PAVILION

A pavilion to mark the centenary of the birth of Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa has been created by Tokyo-based Kengo Kuma Associates. Installed at Bentota on Sri Lanka's southwest coast where Bawa created his famous tropical gardens on the site of a former rubber plantation, the design references a local palm tree known as *kithul*, often used in traditional Sri Lankan craft, to suggest the softness of Bawa's architecture and its roots in nature. A continuous ribbon of steel mesh provides the framework for the woven leaves, folded to create an amorphous form. **kkaa.co.jp**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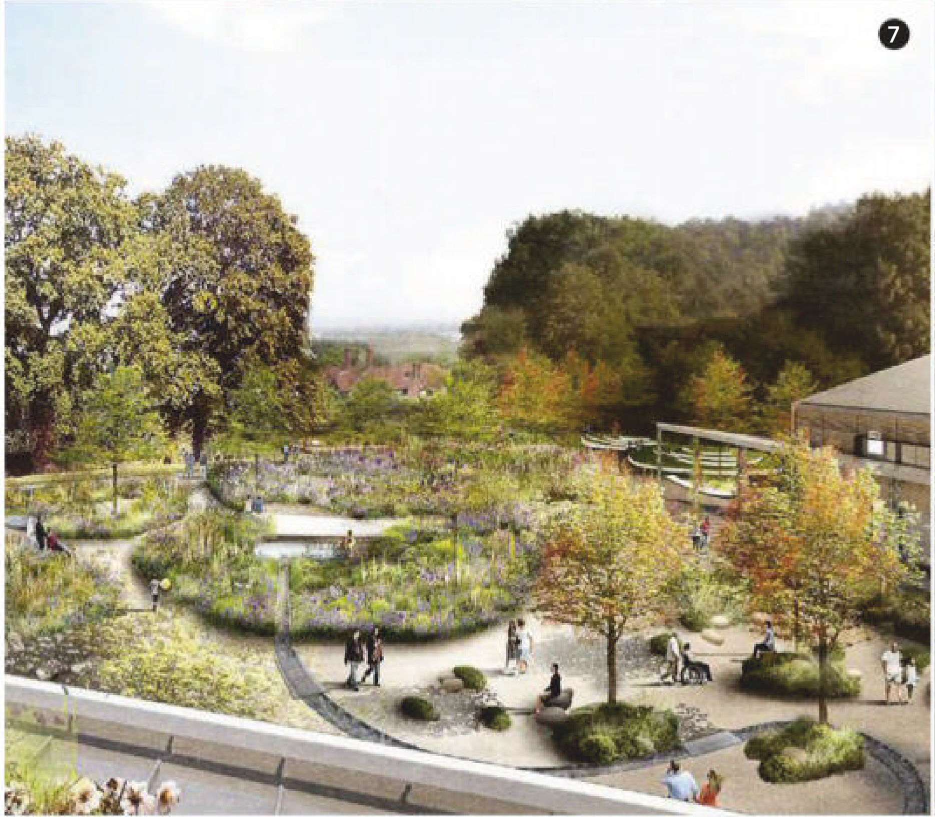
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⑤ NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Detailed plans have been revealed for re-designed gardens at London's Natural History Museum. Landscape architects J&L Gibbons and Feilden Fowles will transform the five-acre gardens, doubling the area of native habitats in the Wildlife Garden and adding a new Learning and Activity Centre. The gardens provide a journey through the history of life on earth with plants, such as tree ferns and cycads, and models dinosaurs, and will become the centrepiece of the Museum's Urban Nature Project that aims to encourage people to engage with the nature on their doorsteps. **nhm.ac.uk**

⑥ APL AWARDS

Garden designer Karen Chamberlain has won Designer of the Year in the APL 2020 awards for a recently refurbished house on the Essex Suffolk border. The T-shaped garden, with a swimming pool as its social hub, features a porcelain pathway, framed with steel-edged, lushly planted beds, and cloister-like side paths framed by a timber pergola on one side and a freestanding structure on the other. A line of *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight' creates a restful backdrop to the pool and the large formal lawn beyond the pool is flanked with box-framed beds. **aplawards.co.uk**; **karenchamberlain.co.uk**

⑦ WISLEY GARDENS

Mark Gregory and his team at Landform Consultants has started on the construction of the three new gardens at RHS Garden Wisley. Starting with the Wellbeing Garden (shown) designed by Matt Keightley, with its serpentine rill and pool, the contractors will then move on to the Wildlife Garden and the World Food Garden, both designed by Ann-Marie Powell. All three gardens will surround the new National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning that will house laboratories, a herbarium, learning studios and teaching garden and a library, which is due to open in spring 2021. **rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley**

⑧ BRIGHTON PAVILION GARDEN

A project to improve the historic garden of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton has received development funding of £214,400 from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The Grade II-listed garden, which was designed by architect John Nash in the early 19th century, has deteriorated in recent years. The plans, which are part of a wider project to re-establish Brighton's Royal Pavilion Estate as a key cultural destination, include restoring listed lamp posts and balustrade and creating a picturesque effect, in keeping with Regency gardens. **brighton-hove.gov.uk**

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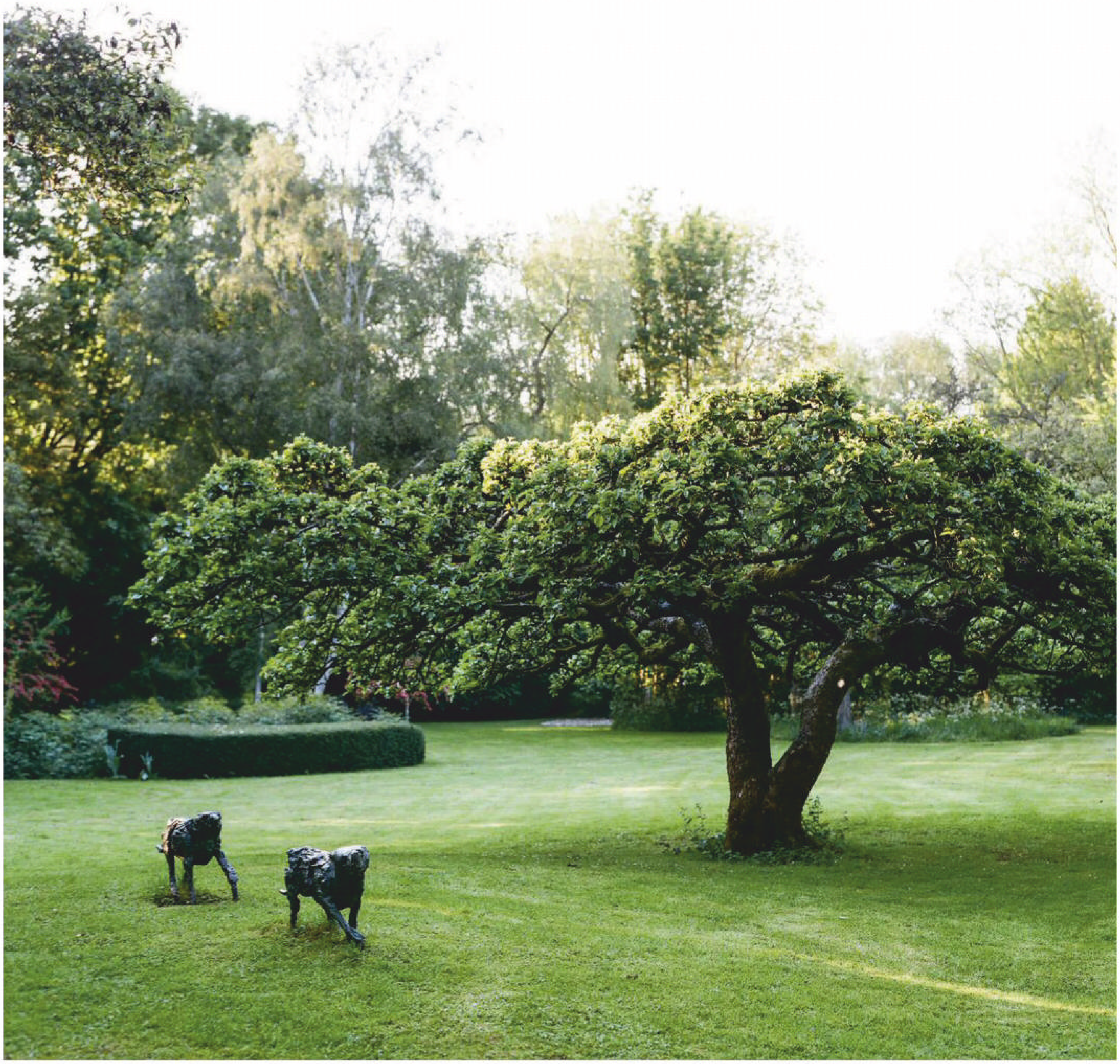
❶ FULL OF LIFE

Without Robert Clatworthy's *Two Dogs* this view could be quite ordinary. The bronze dogs bring movement and animation but their placement is key. The planting at the lawn's edges and the overarching fruit tree frame a space that they perfectly fill.



CRAIG FORDHAM

Using sculpture

Choosing sculpture for your garden is a matter of individual taste, but finding the right position and choosing the best planting to surround it is what will make it stand out

WORDS ANDY STURGEON

There is nothing like garden sculpture to divide opinion. Yet whatever you may think of an individual piece, it's often the positioning that makes or breaks a new installation and the right piece of sculpture in the right setting can add so much if executed with sensitivity.

There are some very good examples of sculpture done well. The Yorkshire Sculpture Park for example, or Jupiter Artland in Scotland and any one of a number of Japanese outdoor galleries. These are all on a significant scale but in every case the setting for each piece has been carefully considered, everything is a composition and is painstakingly curated. The distance at which the piece is first seen by the viewer, the visible angles, the way that sunlight falls upon it through the bare winter trees. Little is left to chance.

> Larger pieces need to sit in a more generous setting, while smaller more delicate objects may have the ability to be nestled among plants and become something to be discovered

But there is no reason why the same level of thought shouldn't go into art in the garden so no matter if an Aphrodite or Barbara Hepworth is your thing, there are certain rules that could be applied.

Often when I'm designing a garden it's quite likely that the owner may buy sculpture in the future, perhaps once the new garden is complete and mature. In this eventuality, I will make a space for a future something without knowing what it might be. I contrive a scene. I make the vista. Perhaps a view looking out of a certain window, or along a path. I will think about backdrops and the space around it.

Retro fitting art into an existing garden requires just as much care. An existing path can work as a vista that leads the eye along it to the 'eye catcher' at the end. It's a tried-and-tested device. But you can also offer glimpsed views of a piece so that it draws you towards it as if beckoning you. The physical route to it can be convoluted and you may not ever need to get close up in order to appreciate it fully.

The backdrop is incredibly important too and you can use the seasons to your advantage. For example, a hedge can be the perfect foil to show off the piece in front. Something pale and light or bright will stand out against a dark-green yew hedge, while something darker, bronze perhaps, could be stunning in front of a fresh-green beech hedge and then become transformed as the leaves fade to brown in winter. An existing wall can often be easily employed although it will need to be plain and uncluttered in order to succeed. If you can look up towards a sculpture you may be able to set it against a backdrop of the sky that can be spectacular, dramatic and ever changing.

In many cases the space around a piece is crucial and crowding sculpture among the planting could be a mistake as this can make it difficult to 'read', particularly from a distance. We don't all have a Henry Moore to command a space but it's often true that larger monolithic pieces need to sit in a more generous setting, while smaller more delicate objects may have the ability to be nestled among plants and become something more incidental to be discovered.

Scale generally is an issue. Smaller pieces or sculptural pots can easily be lifted closer to eye level by mounting on a plinth of stone or timber, allowing them to be appreciated both close up and from afar. But if you are placing something at the end of a lengthy vista it will usually need to be reasonably substantial.

Some scenarios including smaller gardens may lend themselves to wall-mounted art, particularly if floor space is limited. Here the composition of the art and backdrop should be thought of as a whole rather than just adorning a bare space as you might when hanging a picture on a plain living room wall.

Sunlight will influence the look of a piece depending on its form and materiality but as a rule avoid siting something in the shade of trees as it will recede into the shadows by day. Night time is of course a different matter and lighting can transform a piece. There are no hard and fast rules but two or three spotlights will be needed for a balanced effect. Lighting the backdrop as well can make the outcome more dramatic and impactful. □

Andy Sturgeon is an internationally renowned landscape and garden designer. He is the winner of eight Gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, including Best in Show in 2019.
andysturgeon.com

Turn the page for more ideas on garden sculpture

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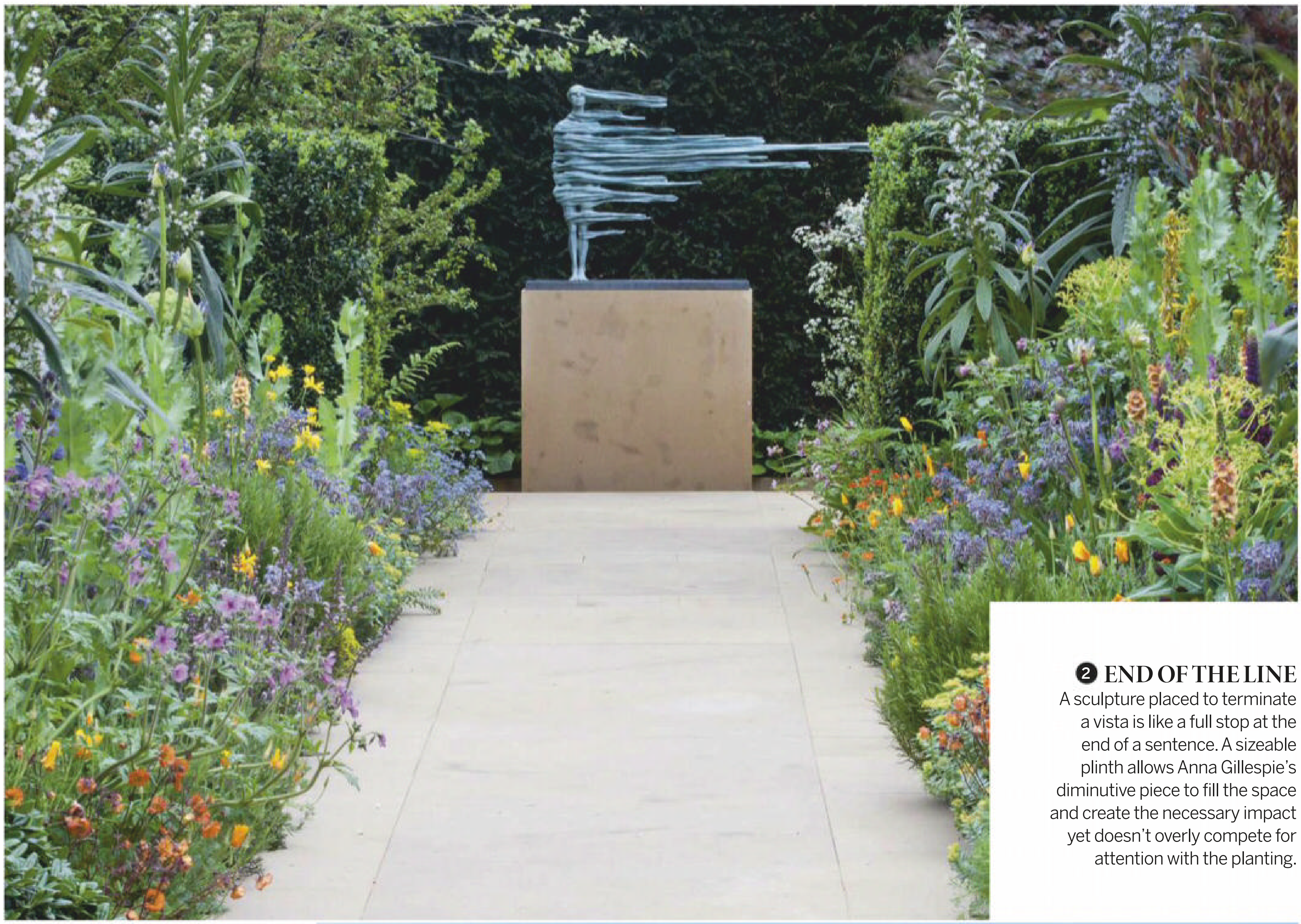
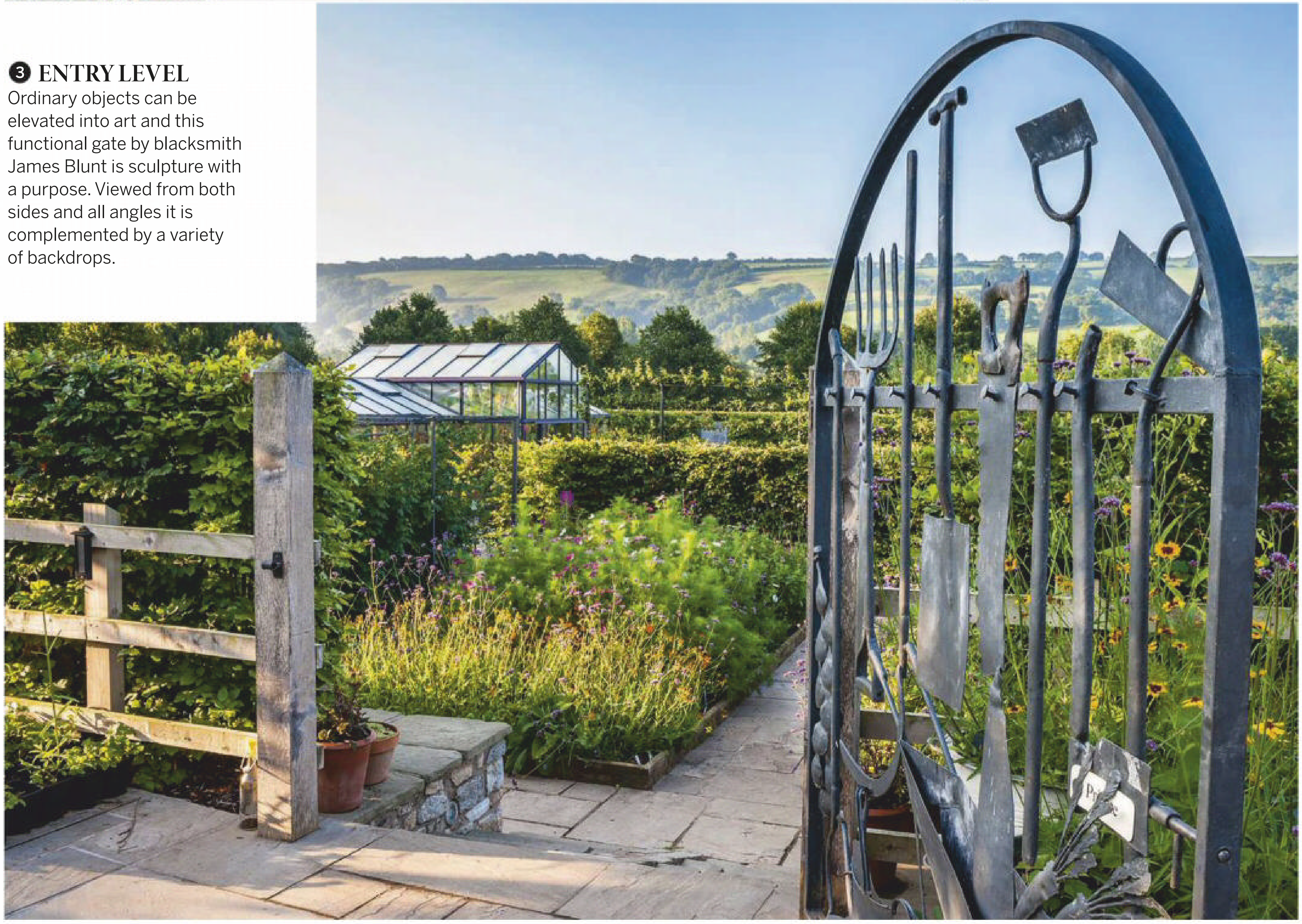


GAP PHOTOS/STEPHEN STUDD - THE ARTHRITIS RESEARCH UK GARDEN. DESIGNER: CHRIS BEARDSHAW. SPONSOR ARTHRITIS RESEARCH UK.

❷ END OF THE LINE

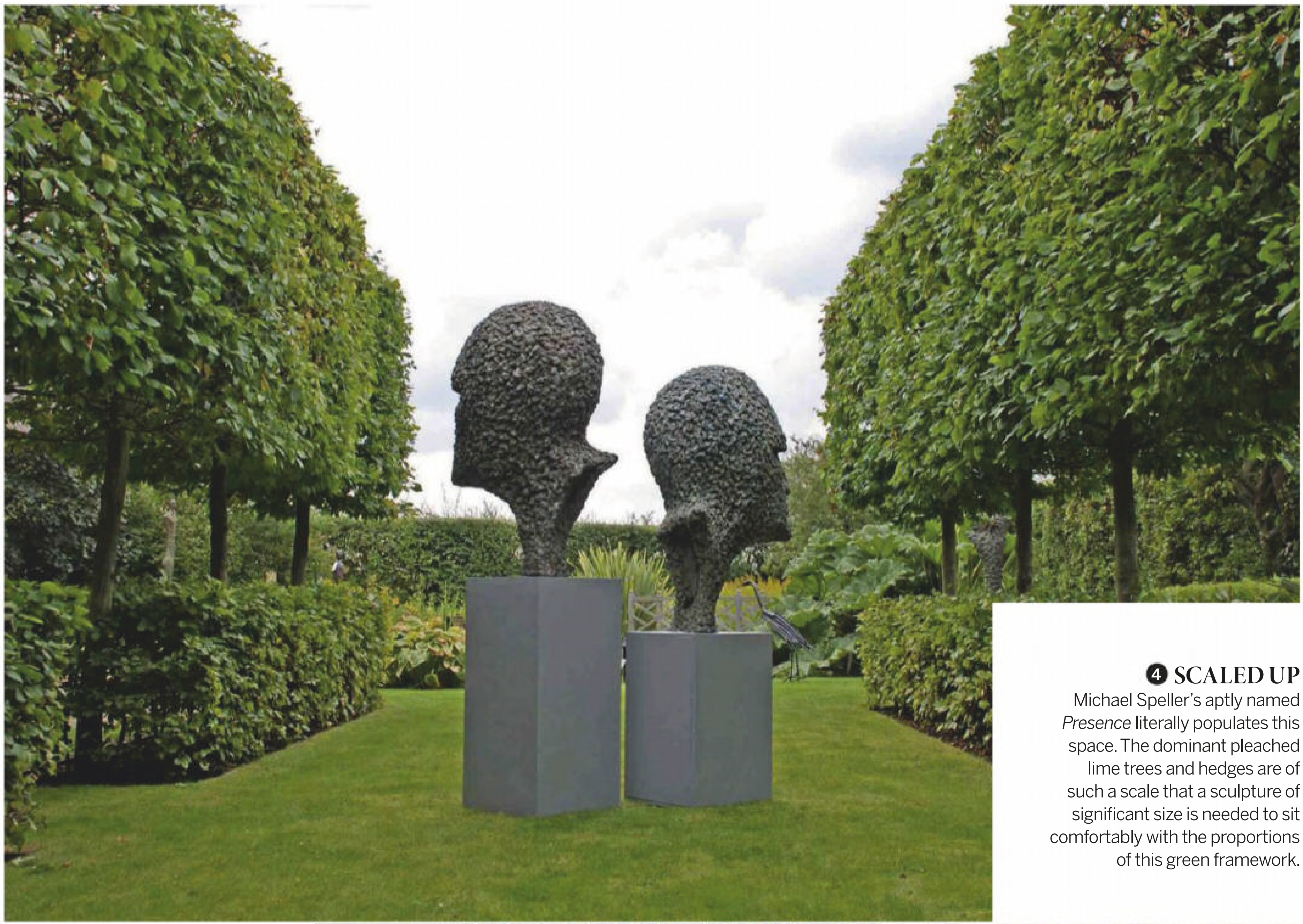
A sculpture placed to terminate a vista is like a full stop at the end of a sentence. A sizeable plinth allows Anna Gillespie's diminutive piece to fill the space and create the necessary impact yet doesn't overly compete for attention with the planting.



BRIGITTE PERDEREAU

❸ ENTRY LEVEL

Ordinary objects can be elevated into art and this functional gate by blacksmith James Blunt is sculpture with a purpose. Viewed from both sides and all angles it is complemented by a variety of backdrops.

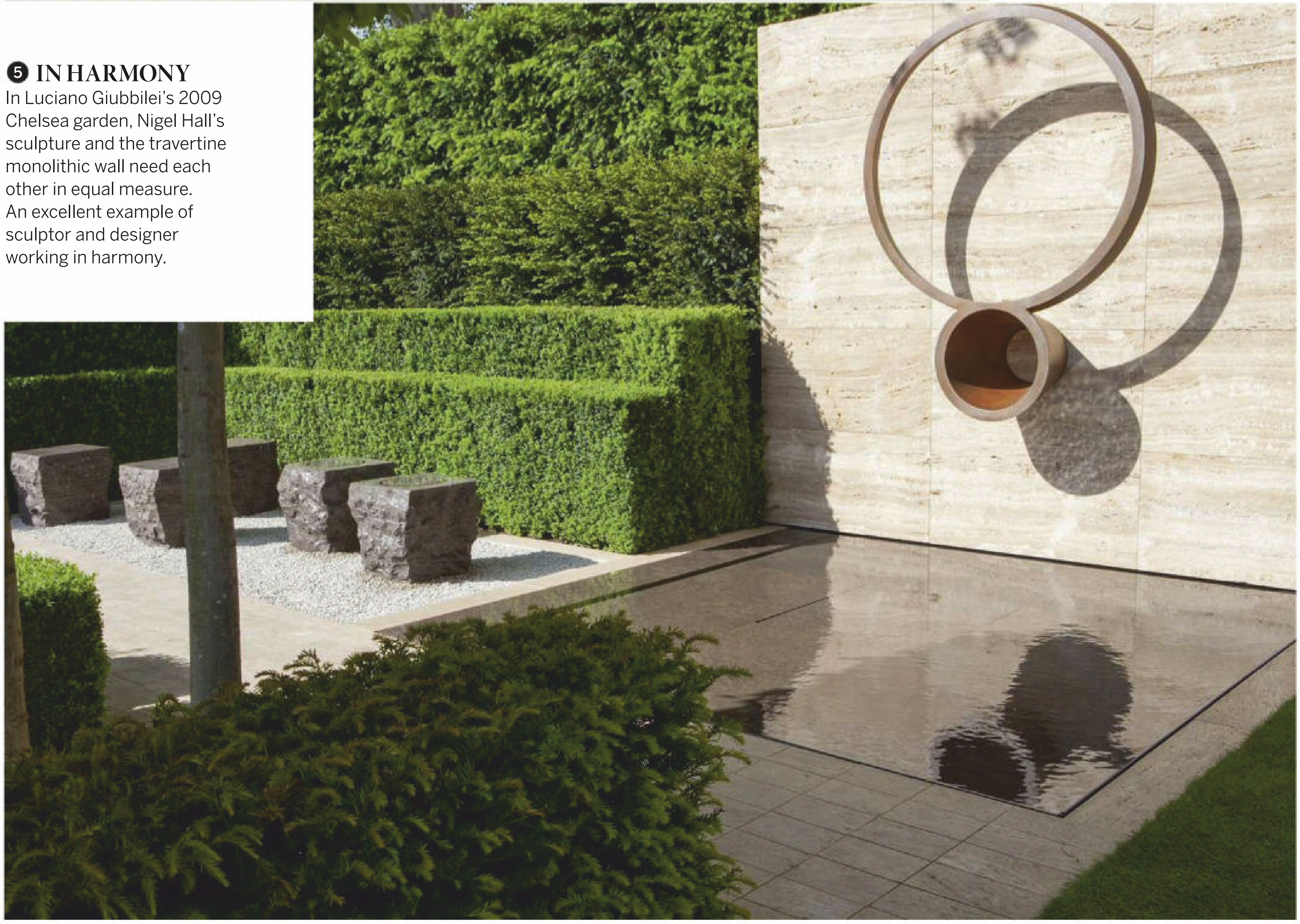


④ SCALED UP

Michael Speller's aptly named *Presence* literally populates this space. The dominant pleached lime trees and hedges are of such a scale that a sculpture of significant size is needed to sit comfortably with the proportions of this green framework.

⑤ IN HARMONY

In Luciano Giubbilei's 2009 Chelsea garden, Nigel Hall's sculpture and the travertine monolithic wall need each other in equal measure. An excellent example of sculptor and designer working in harmony.



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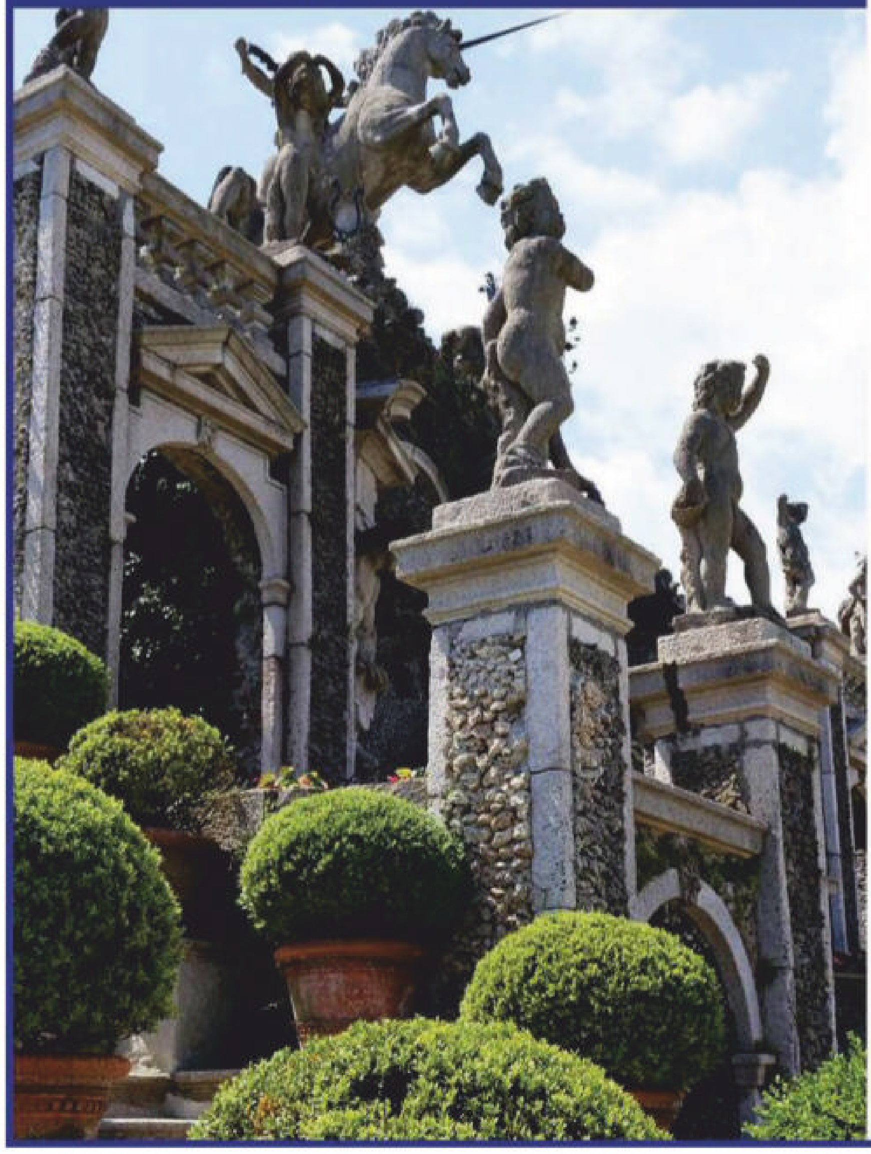

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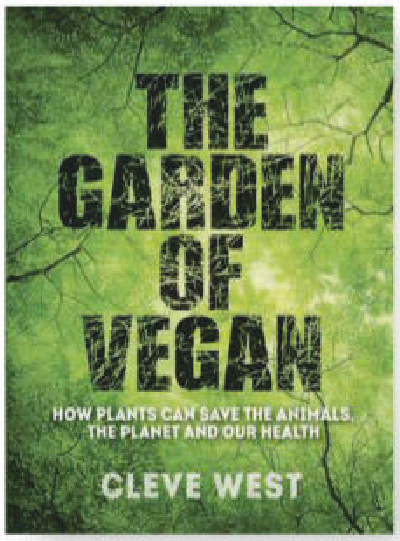
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, back issues, crossword, reader offers

Discover how to grow, harvest and dry your own flowers in *Everlastings* by Bex Partridge, reviewed on page 114.

LAURA EDWARDS

BOOK REVIEWS



THE GARDEN OF VEGAN: HOW PLANTS CAN SAVE THE ANIMALS, THE PLANET AND OUR HEALTH

by Cleve West

Pimpernel Press, £20,
ISBN 978-1910258477

A personal, thought-provoking argument for taking the step from being a wildlife-conscious gardener to living and gardening as a vegan.

Reviewer Mark Diacono is a writer, grower and cook.

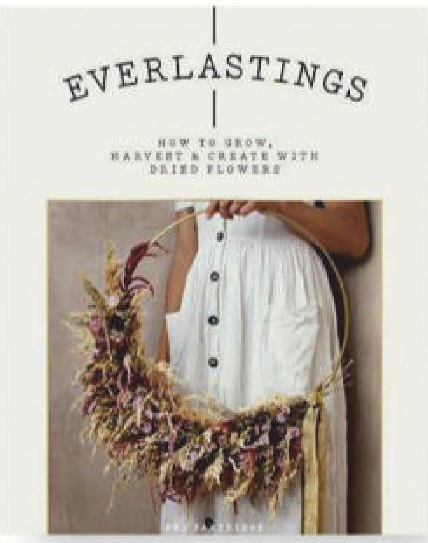
The Garden of Vegan is a personal, persuasive take on why an animal-free diet might be for you and for the wider world. Issues are met head on, delicacies rarely sidestepped. Unpulled punches are intended to affect, in the hope that readers engage differently with the many environmental and health impacts associated with what we eat.

West is the man for this task. An inspiring garden designer, long-term allotmenteer, and one of the nicest people you could meet, West has taken a journey he hopes to encourage us on; from wildlife-centred gardener and vegetarian to vegan activist. His passion is clear, and while the book is not an invitation so much as suite of arguments intended to draw you into the vegan corner, the design and the use of illustrations and visual punctuations is excellent, and the inclusion of gardens and recipes helps break the discussion of often intense issues into more digestible segments.

There are frequent statistics and figures, connections made from impacts to causes, and so on: these – as with most conclusions from statistics – may be arguable, but the connection between how we eat and the hugest issues that face us is undeniable. What West does is offer a strongly made, thoughtfully composed case in response to this, to garden and live within vegan principles.

The Garden of Vegan has its eye more on changing your world view; as West says, this book hopes to 'inspire those with a natural predisposition to wildlife and environmentally friendly gardening to go just one step further'.

Of course, each reader is likely to bring their own, perhaps strongly held, starting point; I suspect those at either end of the spectrum will find little to shift their view, but if you are between the two poles and inquisitive, this challenging, deeply personal book is an important read.



EVERLASTINGS: HOW TO GROW, HARVEST AND CREATE WITH DRIED FLOWERS

by Bex Partridge

Hardie Grant Books, £14.99,
ISBN 978-1784883393

As our love for dried flowers shows no sign of abating, here's a book dedicated to growing and creating long-lasting displays that will not wilt.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance writer.

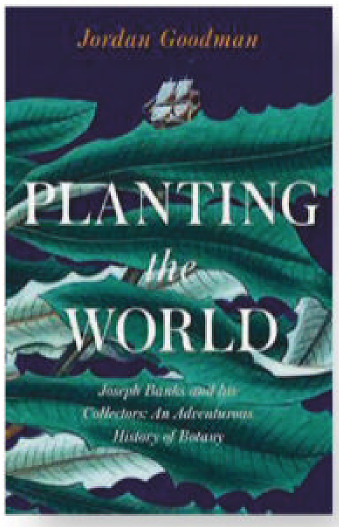
We see them everywhere. Suspended spectacularly in the most stylish restaurants, sweeping around doorways of shops, and tumbling down aisles at weddings. Dried flowers are still trending – and floral artists keep bringing us more inspiring ways to use them. One, Bex Partridge of Botanical Tales, has given us the means to try the art ourselves with her new book, *Everlastings*.

After an introduction from Partridge, extolling the virtues of dried flowers, their sustainability and delicate beauty, the first part of the book has three sections – grow, harvest, create. These cover what to grow in the garden or forage for, when to pick, and methods for drying flowers, seedheads, leaves and grasses. The second half gives us 20 projects, from wreaths and table decorations to botanical mobiles and head pieces, which can be copied to the letter or used for inspiration.

Particularly useful is Partridge's list of flowers and plants that are good for drying, encompassing perennials and annuals, with a select few biennials. Her favourites include strawflowers and cornflowers. The list has name (common and botanical), picking time, and drying method.

The practical advice for choosing which flowers to grow, as well as drying, pressing and making with them is insightful with clear instruction. Partridge shows us how versatile dried flowers can be, and that the growing and making is as rewarding as the finished pieces. Almost every page is illustrated with beautiful photographs by Laura Edwards that illustrate both project steps and the completed makes.

Tips are scattered throughout the book, many on keeping arrangements looking fresh – using a hair dryer to remove cobwebs, for example. Thanks to artists such as Partridge, strawflowers, or everlasting flowers as they are also known, are still shaking off the association with dusty fireplaces and being viewed as chic and contemporary.


Jordan Goodman
PLANTING the WORLD
Joseph Banks and his Collectors: An Adventurous History of Botany

PLANTING THE WORLD: JOSEPH BANKS AND HIS COLLECTORS: AN ADVENTUROUS HISTORY OF BOTANY

by Jordan Goodman

William Collins, £25,
ISBN 978-0007578832

The story of an eminent botanist, the adventures of his collectors and the impact of their achievements on science and economic botany.

Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a garden writer and broadcaster.

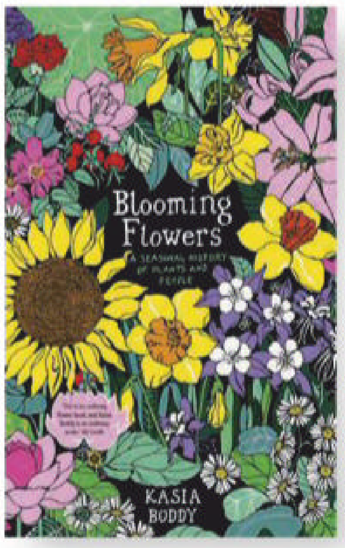
Sir Joseph Banks's credentials are impeccable. President of the Royal Society, founding member of the Horticultural Society (later the RHS) and the first unofficial director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. This book focuses on his own botanical exploits and those of his collectors, who furthered Banks's aim to increase the wealth, power and prestige of Britain and to create a garden fit for a king, to astonish the world.

It begins by documenting Banks's life until his return from Cook's first expedition in 1771, which established him as a major player in the botanical world, followed by chapters on the expeditions of his plant hunters and gardeners, in chronological order.

Tales of plant collecting in far-off lands for botanical advancement through familiar names, such as Masson and Menzies, are interwoven with a lesser known aspect of Banks's work as a great economic botanist, which involved botanical espionage and plant transfers around the world, including Captain Bligh taking breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indies, attempts to establish a cochineal industry in India and cotton plantations in the West Indies. Add the transport of food crops to Australia and it is soon evident why he is commemorated in the Economic Botany Centre at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

The extraordinary stories and travelogues are further enhanced with the adventures of lesser-known collectors, including brothers John and Alexander Duncan in China, Johann Koenig, who sent Banks his first specimens from India and Adam Afzelius in Sierra Leone. One of the most inspiring, of all is the redoubtable character George Caley. All, finally, receive due recognition.

While reading, you can hear crashing waves and whistling wind as you travel with them on their perilous journeys. For anyone with a passion for history, adventure and plants, this is an exhilarating and enjoyable read.



BLOOMING FLOWERS: A SEASONAL HISTORY OF PLANTS AND PEOPLE

by Kasia Boddy

Yale University Press, £14.99,
ISBN 978-0300243338

A book to dip into little and often, which serves up a year's worth of intellectual stimulation, sensual pleasure and high-brow, pub-quiz trivia.

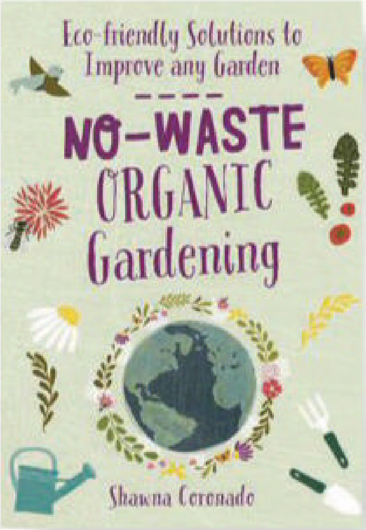
Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

This engaging book, subtitled *A Seasonal History of Plants and People*, is hard to classify but easy to read. Author Kasia Boddy is a Cambridge University academic who has devoted herself to the study of literature, so you would expect her exploration of the role of plants in cultural history to be beautifully written, but the breadth of her references is quite simply breathtaking. From ancient history to modern pop culture, through the outer reaches of art, politics and religion, she wrangles her references into 16 carefully curated chapters, subdivided into seasonal sections which consider four flowers a piece.

Take the chapter on Daffodils, in which Boddy tells the story of how William Wordsworth came to write the one poem that everyone has heard of. This is unexpectedly interwoven with an exploration of the Caribbean literary canon that perceives a 'daffodilish presence' hanging over everything, imposing colonialist assumptions on readers (and writers) who most probably had never seen even a single golden trumpet bloom. Then she explains how Wordsworth's poem was largely derided during his lifetime and only became really popular some decades after his death, when the Lake District tourism industry spotted its marketing potential. Threaded through it all are classical and Persian references, a botanical comparison of *Narcissus tazetta* with *N. pseudonarcissus*, and a historical consideration of the geographical origins of the Tenby Daffodil. No wonder this book's final credits for literary sources runs to nearly 20 pages of closely spaced entries.

If you have ever wondered how Calla lilies became a symbol of the Republican movement in Ireland, or why the historic association of roses with prostitution was revived to circumvent civic decency laws on dating websites, or how exactly you extract opium from poppies, then you will love *Blooming Flowers*.

BOOK REVIEWS


Eco-friendly Solutions to Improve any Garden
NO-WASTE ORGANIC Gardening
Shawna Coronado

NO-WASTE ORGANIC GARDENING
by Shawna Coronado

Cool Springs Press, £14.99,
ISBN 978-0760367643

Recycle and reuse your way to a less wasteful and more environmentally friendly garden with this collection of handy tips and tricks.

Reviewer Catherine Smalley is a freelance writer and gardener.

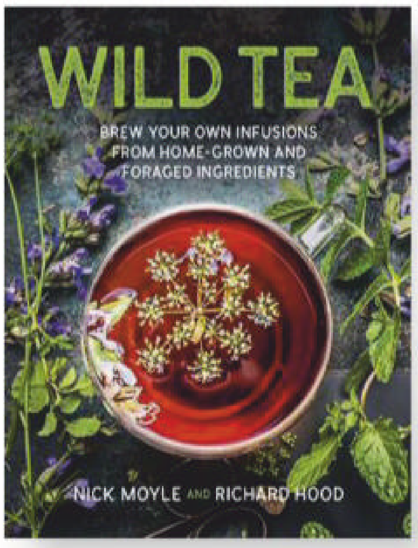
From reusing plastic food containers to use as seed trays and cloches, to making your own compost, eco-friendly gardening goes hand in hand with saving money and being more resourceful. US green-living author Shawna Coronado takes inspiration from her Second World War-era grandmothers to create this timely collection of practical tips on how to reduce, reuse and recycle in the garden.

Collecting seeds in a paper bag or laying down cardboard to suppress weeds might seem obvious to some, but other suggestions are quite novel – I had never thought of using coffee filters to prevent soil leaking from drainage holes. Even for gardening sages, there are clever tricks on offer here.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its simplification of organic techniques. In her friendly and colloquial style, Coronado offers the most straightforward explanation of no-dig gardening I have ever come across and demystifies the art of making compost; ingredients are broken down into carbon-rich 'browns' and nitrogen-rich 'greens', and we are advised to keep the pile 'as moist as a wrung-out sponge'. I particularly enjoyed the simple recipes for manure tea and soap-based insecticide – a welcome antidote to the rows of chemicals found in many a garden shed.

At times, the text can feel slightly lightweight and the explanations of how each action helps to avoid waste become repetitive, but the spirit of ingenuity that runs through the book makes this forgivable.

Now, and into the future, gardeners will by necessity have to be more resource-conscious, and through her funky wine bottle watering cans, clever rubbish bin rain barrels and colourful upcycled garden furniture, Coronado shows that such challenges can in fact be a source of creativity, and even fun.


WILD TEA
BREW YOUR OWN INFUSIONS FROM HOME-GROWN AND FORAGED INGREDIENTS
NICK MOYLE AND RICHARD HOOD

WILD TEAS – BREW YOUR OWN TEAS AND INFUSIONS FROM HOME-GROWN AND FORAGED INGREDIENTS
by Nick Moyle and Richard Hood

Eddison Books, £16.99,
ISBN 978-1859064573

Lovers of a good cuppa will find ideas aplenty in this inspiring guide revealing the wealth of possibilities close at hand.

Reviewer Natasha Goodfellow is a freelance garden writer and editor.

Following on from their hit craft beer book *Brew it Yourself*, Nick Moyle and Richard Hood, aka Two Thirsty Gardeners, have expanded their repertoire to focus on another good brew: tea. Not 'proper' tea in the form of *Camellia sinensis* (although details on growing, harvesting and making blends with it are included, should you wish to try), but the delicious concoctions that result when berries, roots, seeds, leaves and flowers are steeped or simmered in hot water.

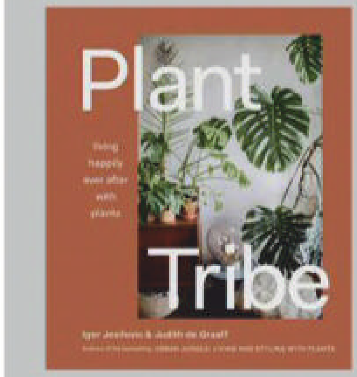
The possibilities seem endless. Most of us know for example that mint or lemon verbena leaves or camomile flowers make a good drink, but did you know that strawberries, sage and even sweetcorn silks are not only tasty, but good for you too? The bulk of the book focuses on 40 such ingredients, from beetroot to yarrow, providing notes on how to grow or where to find them, how to brew them, health benefits and how they might be mixed, along with fun facts and interesting asides.

There then follows a listing of other less common ingredients, ideas for blends, and a section on special concoctions purporting to need more effort 'than simply dunking an ingredient in hot water'. I can't see myself plucking handfuls of goosegrass in order to dry it, roast the seeds and then grind them to make Cleavers Coffee – apparently an excellent substitute for the real thing – but the simplicity of the 'sun teas' (a jug of fruit, black tea and water left in a sunny spot to infuse) is beguiling. As indeed is the sound of the Green Tea and Cucumber Martini.

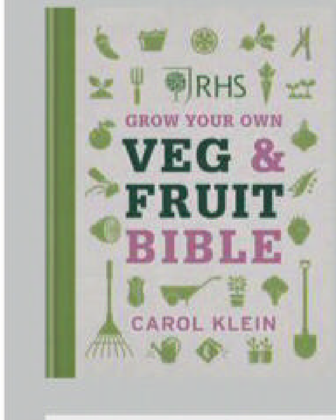
Beautifully photographed and written in a light-hearted, slightly tongue-in-cheek style (Thrifty Shades of (Earl) Grey), this is an accessible guide that will make gardeners, foragers and cooks consider their cuppas in a whole new light.

Other books

This month, find healthy ways to live happily with plants and learn how to grow vegetables to boost your gut health.


Plant Tribe
living happily ever after with plants
Igor Josifovic & Judith de Graaff

PLANT TRIBE: LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER WITH PLANTS
by Igor Josifovic and
Judith De Graaff
Harry N Abrams, £25
Stylish advice for sharing your home with plants, with ideas on how plants can help nurture the soul, from the authors of *Urban Jungle*.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GROW YOUR OWN
VEG & FRUIT BIBLE
CAROL KLEIN

RHS GROW YOUR OWN VEG & FRUIT BIBLE
by Carol Klein
Octopus Publishing Group, £30
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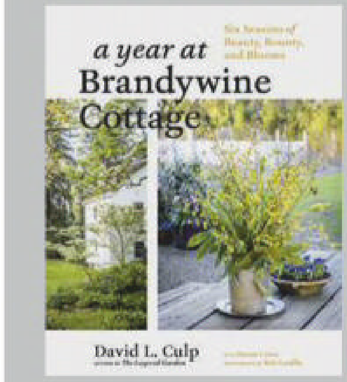
Easy-to-follow, practical advice on growing fruit, vegetables, salads and herbs throughout the year no matter how big or small your garden.


a year at Brandywine Cottage
David L. Culp

A YEAR AT BRANDYWINE COTTAGE
by David L Culp
Timber Press, £26.99
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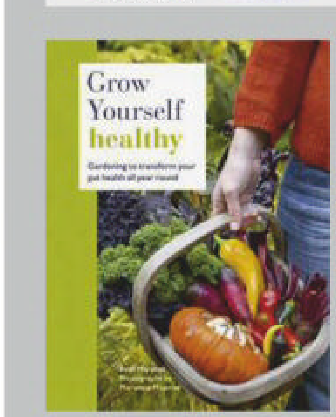
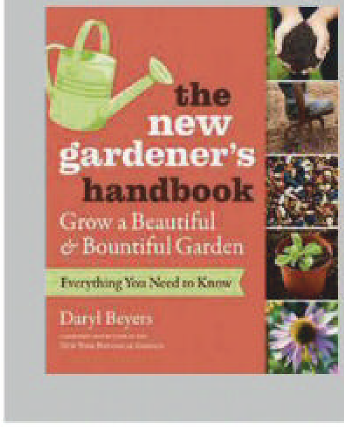
Ideas for making the most of your garden for 12 months of the year, based on the author's experience of creating his own garden.


Grow Yourself healthy

GROW YOURSELF HEALTHY
by Beth Marshall
Frances Lincoln Publishers, £18.99
ISBN 978-0711250710
A practical guide to planning and managing an edible garden for optimising gut health, with tips on what to grow, how to grow it and health-boosting recipes.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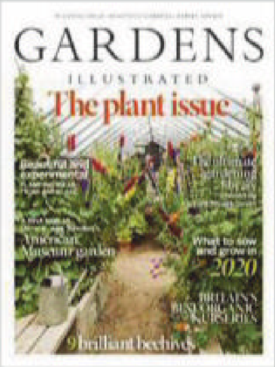
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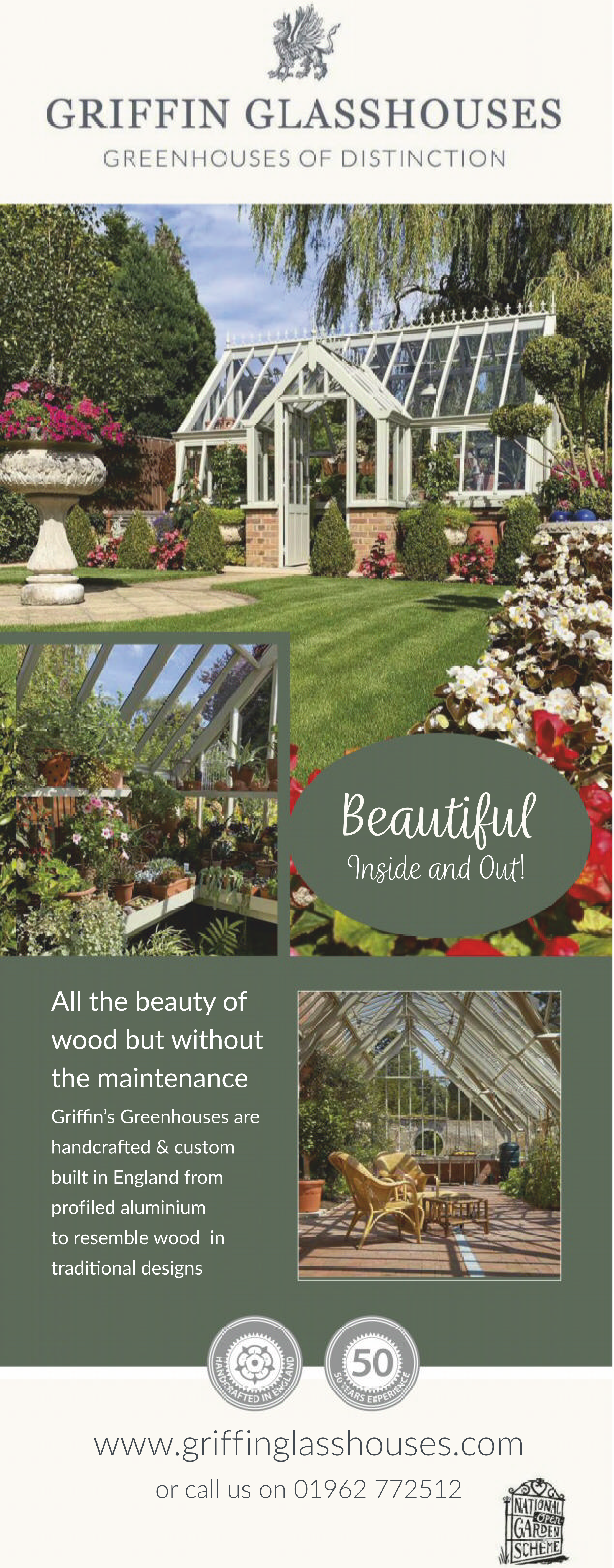

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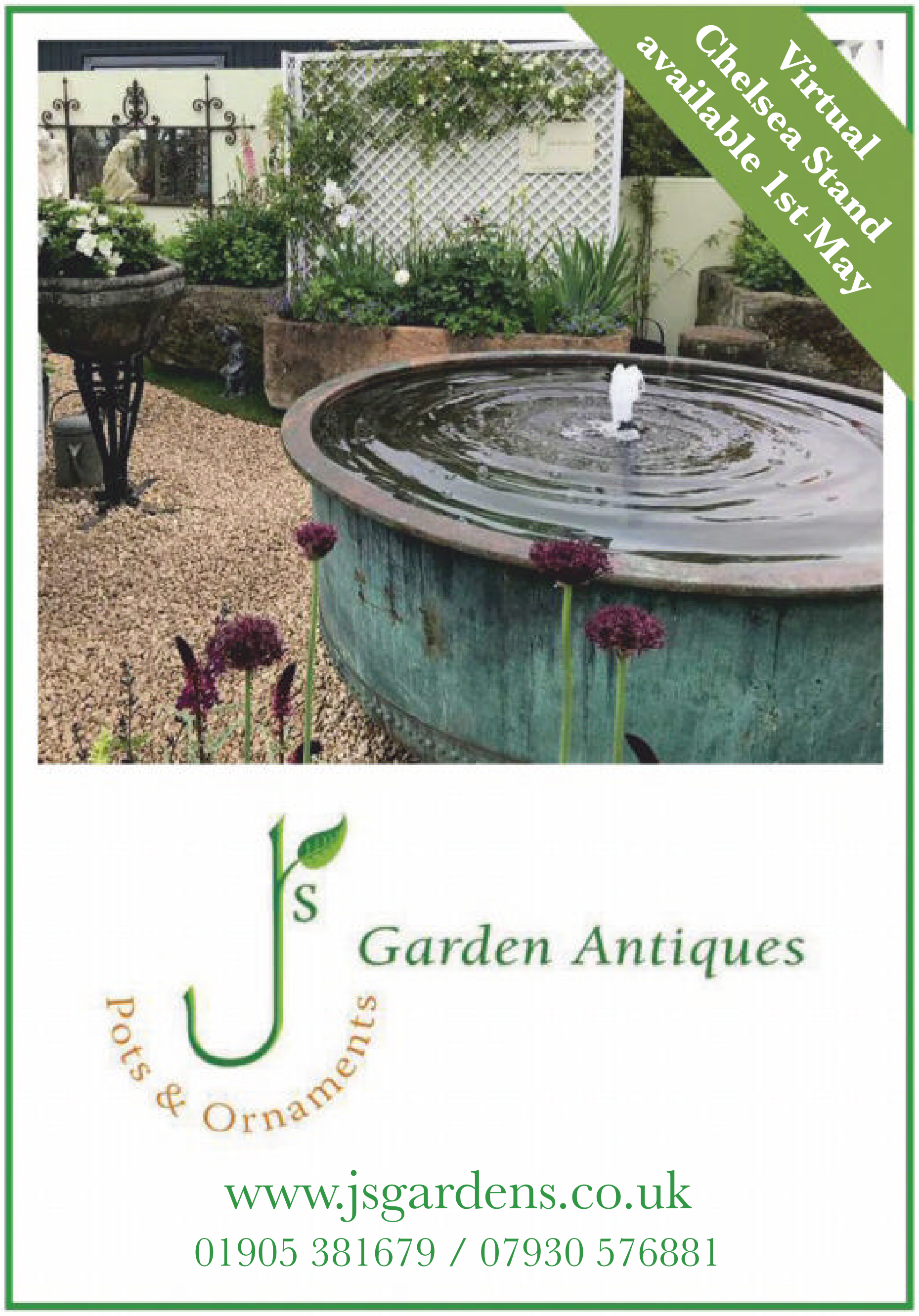

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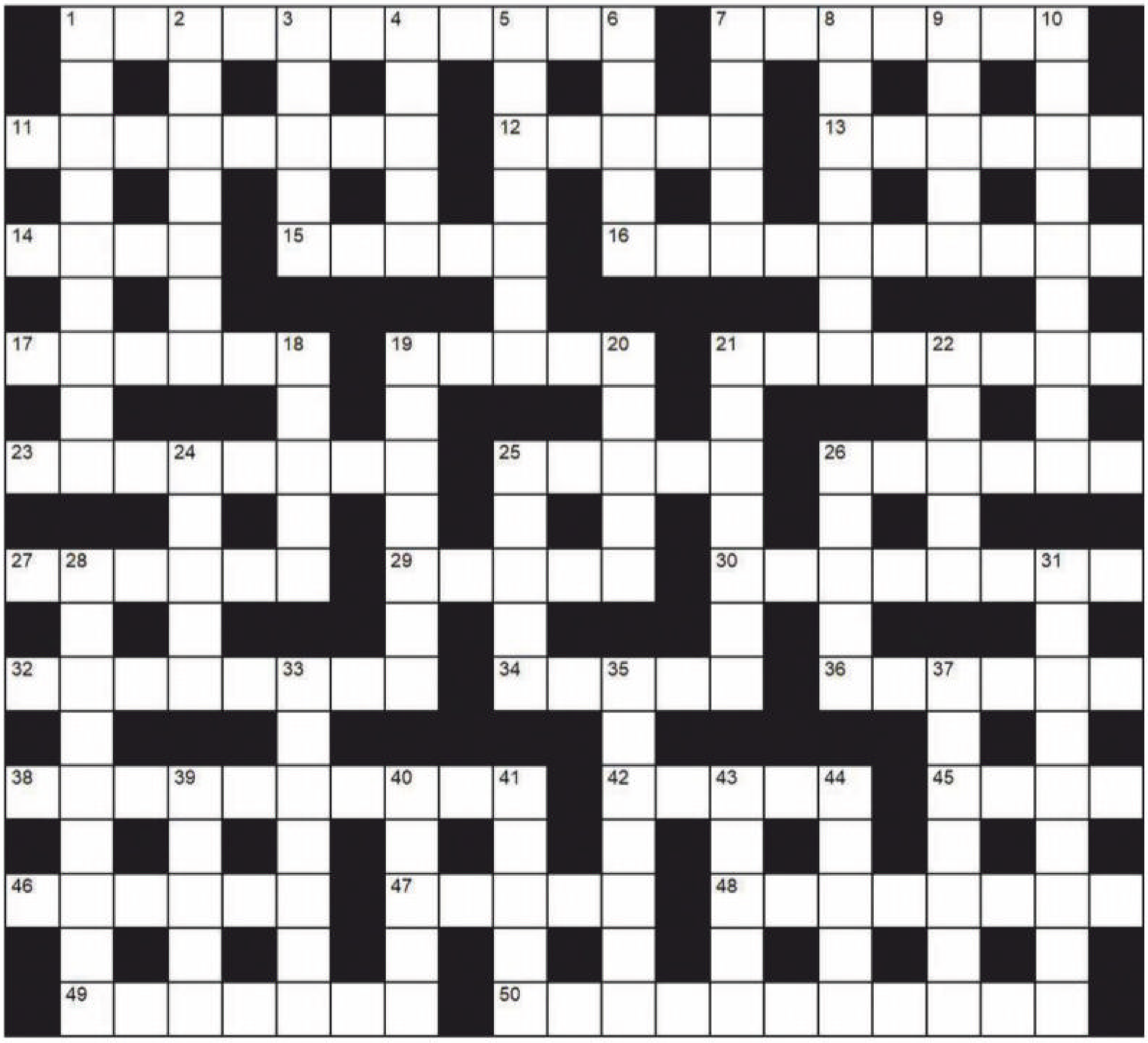

SOLUTIONS TO MAY'S CROSSWORD

Across
4 Firethorn **7** Pin-up
9 Rambler **10** Venusta
11 Layia **13** Tiara **14** Cat
15 Eschscholzia **20** Bed
21 Regal **23** Viola
24 Cantino **26** Panicum
28 Storm **29** Sensation.

Down
1 Arum **2** Botrytis **3** Ants
4 Ferula **5** Tilia **6** Nivea **7** Pintail
8 Plants **12** Yield **14** Chico
16 Cirsium **17** Half pint
18 Abacus **19** Carmen **22** Grows
23 Vinca **25** Neon **27** Coir.

ACROSS

1 Small blue-flowering plant in genus *Myosotis* (6-2-3)

7 Hydrangea with a flat head of tiny clustered flowers (7)

11 Relating to trees… or arable mixture (8)

12 See 17 across

13 A red-and-white dahlia – that belongs to a clan? (6)

14 A pale-blue *Pulmonaria* ageing to white, and a gemstone (4)

15 Grow like eg *Aubrieta*… or stalk (5)

16 Like a young dwarf french bean – no special conditions attached? (10)

17/12 Common name for a species of *Panicum* – exchange lawn material? (6,5)

19 Some rascal plantsman cut lawn grass too low! (5)

21 One who cultivates eg a David Austin flower (8)

23 The strawberry genus (8)

25 Harmful as eg laburnum seeds are (5)

26 Pulverise… a plant in *Cucurbita* genus (6)

27 A named conical magnolia tree with rich pink flowers – 'Milky Way'? (6)

29 Australian pop singer's first pale pink aster (now *Symphyotrichum*) (5)

30 A NZ mound-forming sub-shrub – produced from bare heap (8)

32 Sent out new shoots, like a certain brassica? (8)

34 Trims small bits – from rotten pears! (5)

36 Plant with profuse tiny flowers – commonly misapplied name for *Chaenostoma* (6)

38 Plant with upright flower spikes, commonly called larkspur (10)

42 Reduce garden waste bulk, for example – right inside garden hut (5)

45 See 25 down

46 A white-flowering floribunda wisteria – worn in Japan (6)

47 Deciduous conifer, genus *Larix* (5)

48 A raspberry/blackberry hybrid named after a Scottish river (8)

49 A carrot cultivar resistant to carrot fly – or steam, oddly (7)

50 *Amaryllis*-like genus – put samphire out (11)

DOWN

1 Name of a *Nandina* with brilliant winter foliage – or few ripe, anyway (4,5)

2 Small underground growth – or Lotte's mistaken (7)

3 Upright, like a lupin flower spikes (5)

4 The mallow genus – partly formal variety (5)

5 Genus of love-in-a-mist plant (7)

6 As the *Dionaea muscipula* plant captures insects (5)

7 Intense light beam… in primula serration (5)

8 Genus of plant commonly called smoke bush (7)

9 Common name for *Heuchera*, ___ bells (5)

10 Species eg of tulip 'Fusilier' meaning superior – aren't saps, anyway (9)

18 ___ Wheatcroft, a flamboyant 21 across in the 1950-60s (5)

19 A plant with a scape is ___ (7)

20 Series of colourful dwarf lilies – Little Fairy? (5)

21 Cook's lists of ingredients – er, spice maybe? (7)

22 Approximate… texture of *Lantana* leaves (5)

24 Bat droppings used as a slow-release fertiliser (5)

25/45 Common name for *Liriodendron* (5,4)

26 Woody plant – mad rush to get first of berberis (5)

28 Genus of hart's tongue fern – possibly, um, alpines? (9)

31 Genus of hare's ear plant – mix blue rum up (9)

33 Remove unwanted seedlings/plants (4,3)

35 A sweet briar's autumnal fruit – pink and trendy (7)

37 Dandelion-like wildflower with hairy leaves – acres at resort (4,3)

39 Having a tendency… to be face downwards (5)

40 Shedding extremes of biology, oddly, produces cauliflower bred for close-planting… in cold house! (5)

41 *Caltha palustris* is the ___ marigold (5)

43 Nutty-flavoured maincrop potato – fantastic treat! (5)

44 Genus of mountain avens – in sundry assortments (5)

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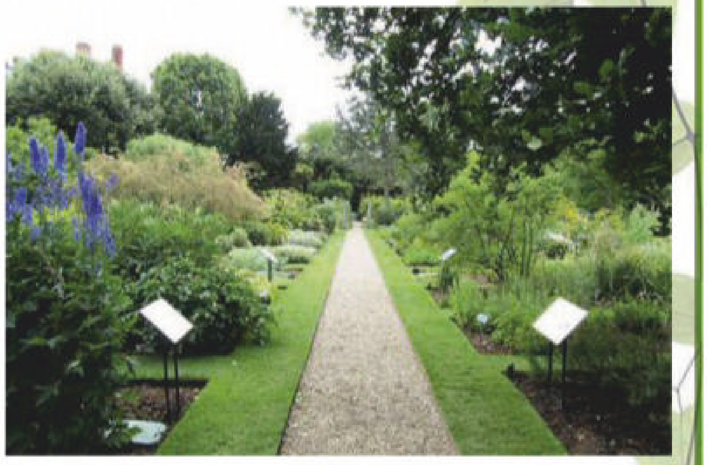

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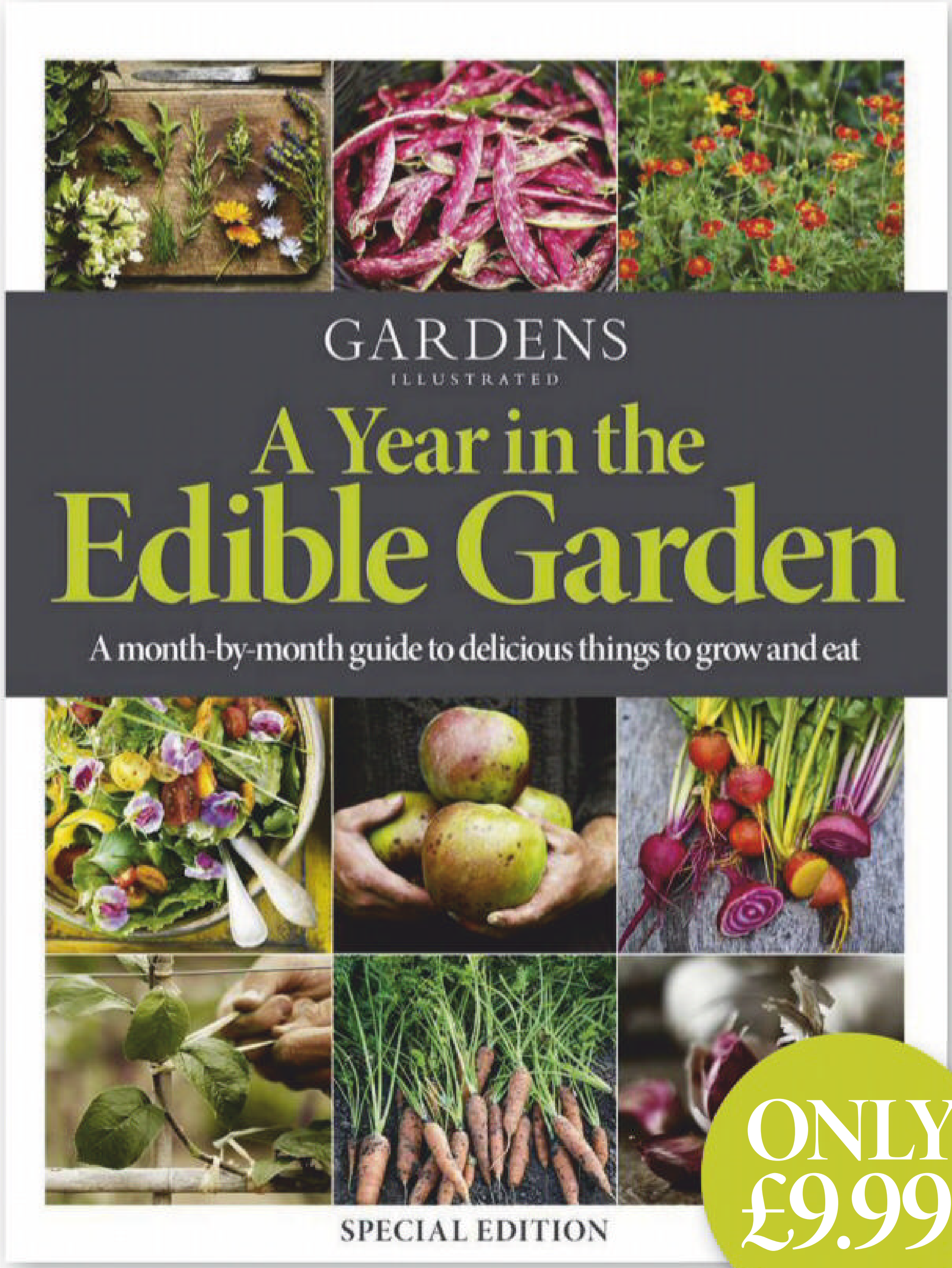
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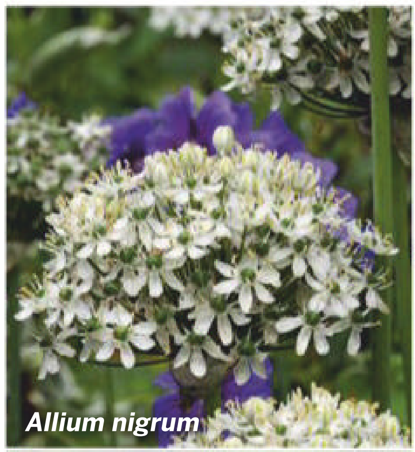
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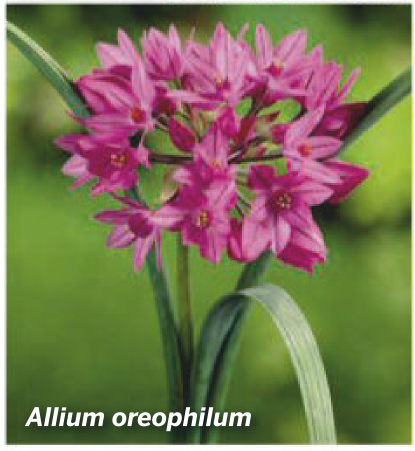
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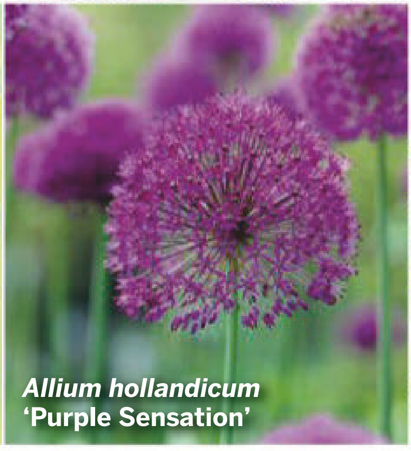
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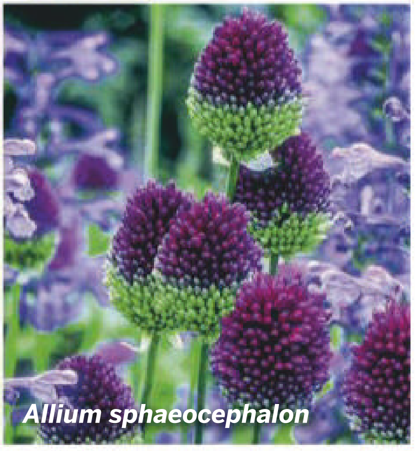
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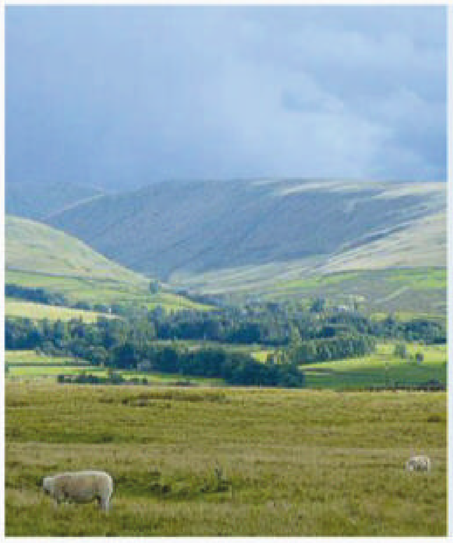

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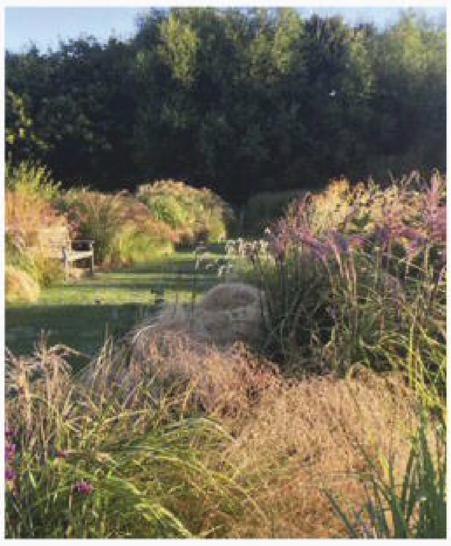

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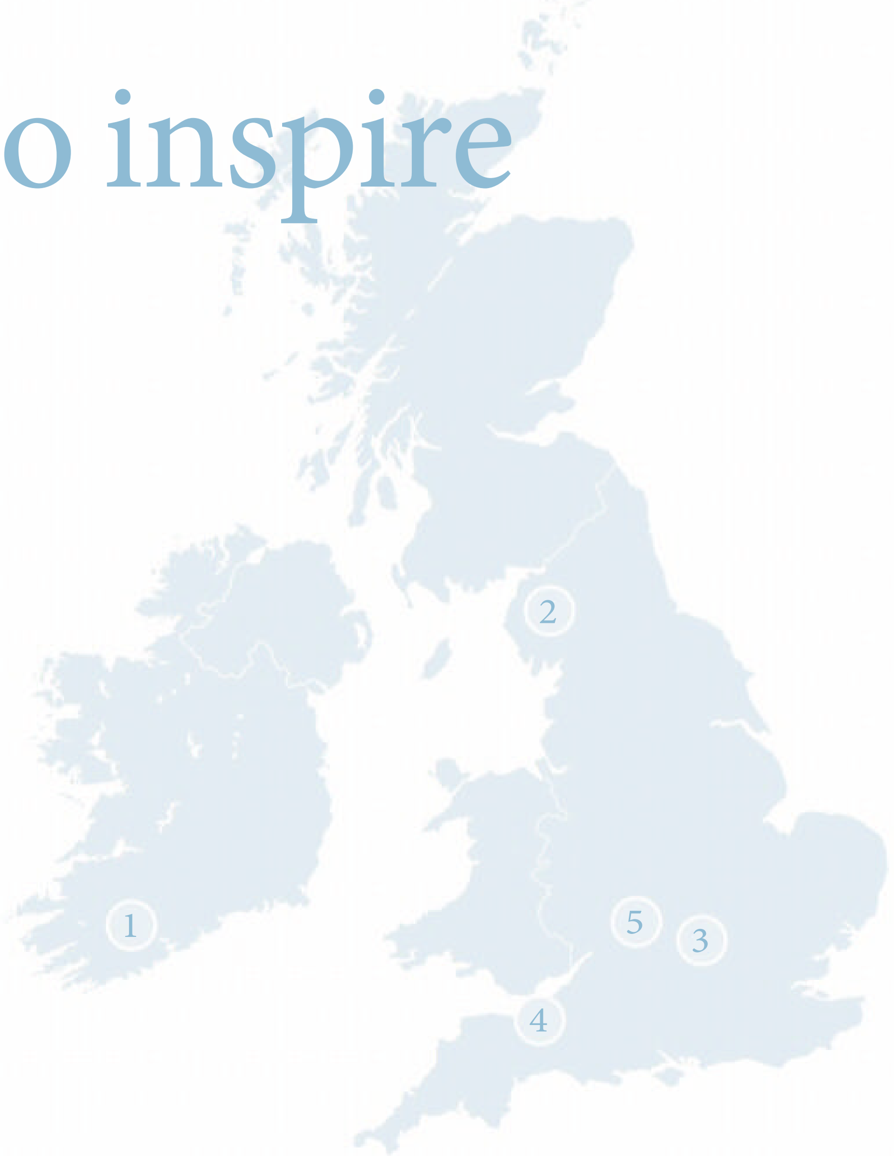

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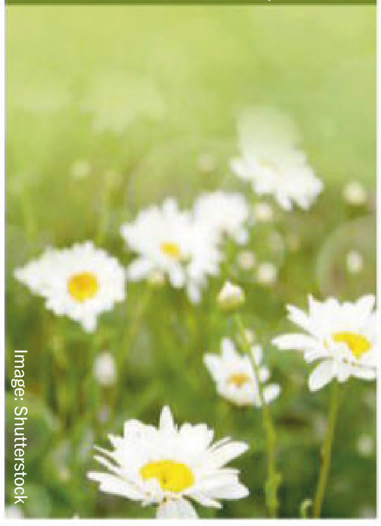

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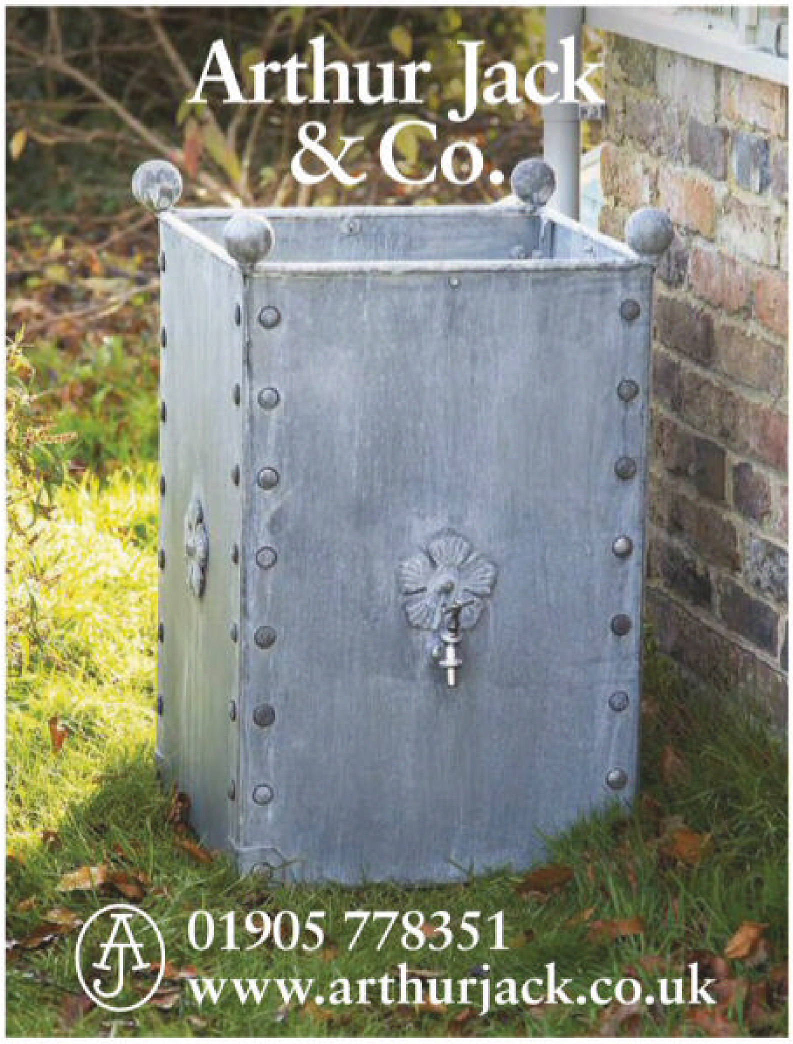

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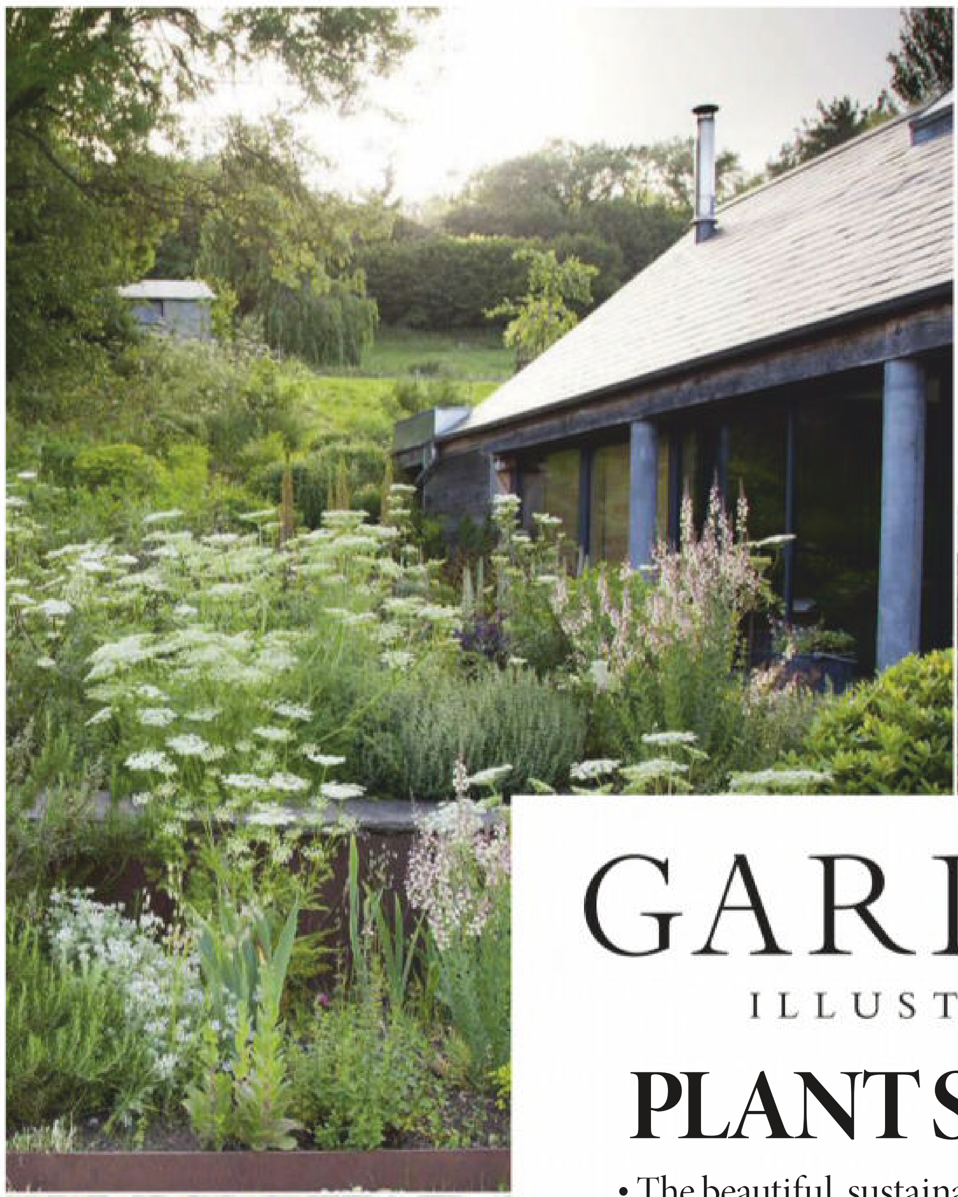

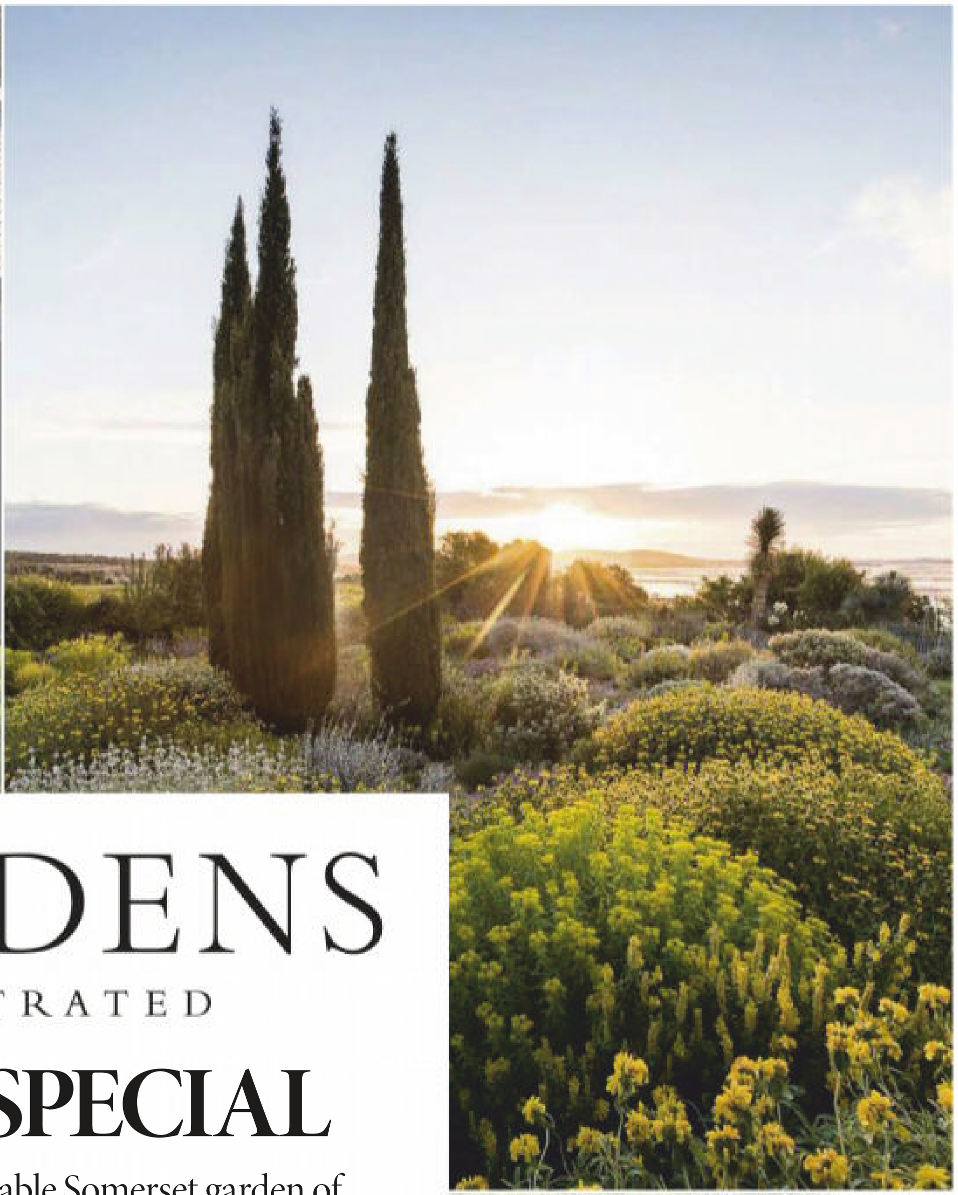

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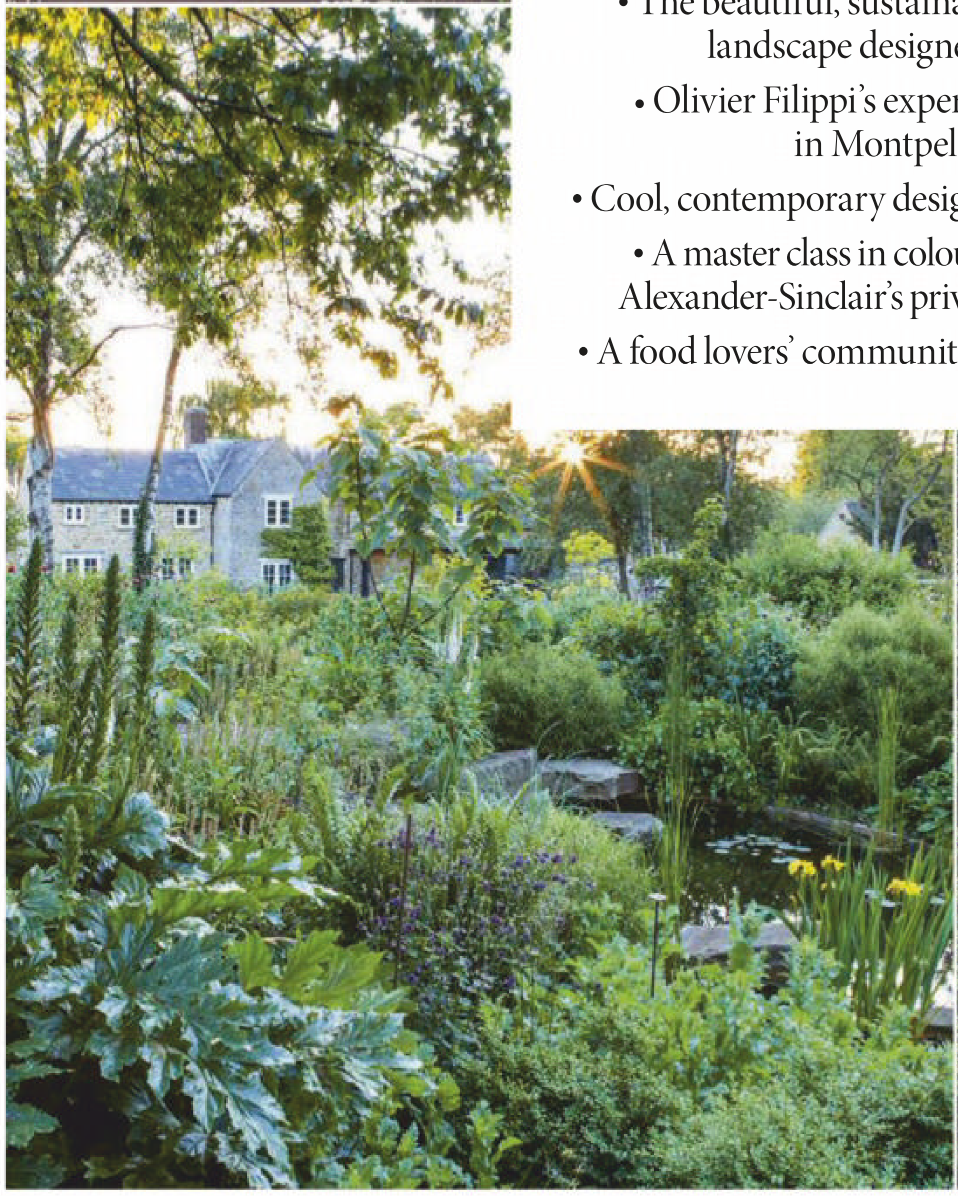

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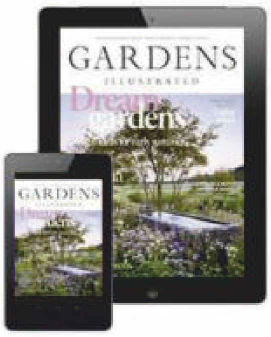

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HOUSEPLANTS

Kalanchoe

Kalanchoes are easy to care for and some are also satisfyingly tactile

WORDS **JANE PERRONE** ILLUSTRATION **PATRICK MORGAN**

Some people like to meditate or listen to classical music to relax; I like to stroke my succulents. I choose carefully, of course, avoiding the spiky sorts, and the deceptively velvety bunny ears (*Opuntia microdasys*), which draws you in with its tufts of tiny, glochid spines, only to lodge them painfully in your skin –a mistake you only make once. *Kalanchoe beharensis* is a far more suitable subject for a stroke, with leaves covered in a closely cropped fuzz that earns it the common name of feltbush. Visit California and you'll see this plant growing as large shrubs outside stucco homes: it is frost-tender, so in the UK a large conservatory may be necessary to house a mature specimen. If you too are the leaf stroking type, this and several other members of the genus offer the safest and most satisfying species to run your fingers over. If space is limited, the more compact, *K. orgyalis* is a better bet. It is named copper spoons for the shape and hue of its foliage, which starts out looking as if it's been dipped in cinnamon on top and silver below, fading to silver all over with age. Probably the most widely available is the panda plant, *K. tomentosa*, whose silvery leaves look as if they have been dipped in chocolate.

For the plants, this fuzz (the hairs are correctly known as trichomes) serves a number of roles: making them an unpleasant snack for browsing herbivores and insect pests, shading the leaf's surface from the sun, reducing water loss, and trapping the dew that forms when cold nights give way to searing hot days in their native homes. The best-selling kalanchoe is flaming katy, *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*, loved not for its disappointingly unfuzzy green leaves but for its fiery red flowers and its ability to bloom for weeks on end on the average windowsill. For me, familiarity has bred contempt for this cheap and cheerful houseplant: and there are new cultivars of flowering kalanchoes coming on to the market that I find far more appealing, such as *K.* 'Magic Bells', a cultivar of *K. pinnata*, with curious lime-green tubular flowers that dangle from the upright plant to give a chandelier effect. I also love the dwarf *Kalanchoe* species *K. pumila* with its clusters of sugar pink flowers and silvery leaves: this one really is an ideal plant for a small windowsill with a height and spread of just 20cm each way.

Whether furry or flowery, the kalanchoes you are most likely to find hail from Madagascar, where they mostly dwell on the margins of forests in semi-arid climates: this makes them surprisingly amenable to life in a house. They shrug off dry air caused by central heating with ease, and can cope with being forgotten for a few weeks, especially over winter when they should be watered infrequently. From late spring to late summer they need more regular watering, but only administer the can once the soil's surface is completely dry. Kalanchoes prefer a bit more humus in their soil than desert-dwelling cacti, so I use a loam-based potting mix such as John Innes No. 2 cut with a generous handful of perlite or horticultural grit. Kalanchoes will enjoy a sunny windowsill, but may struggle in a south-facing conservatory at the height of summer: come winter, a temperature of around 16°C and bright light will avoid the plant becoming leggy.

Propagating plantlets

Many species of *Kalanchoe* will propagate from a leaf carefully removed from the stem by the petiole, but there are some that produce tiny plantlets along their leaf margins. In some species, this only occurs when the plant is stressed, but others such as *K. daigremontiana* and *K. delagoensis* reproduce this way as a matter of course. These are the bane of every cactus nursery's lives, as they drop off at the slightest disturbance, rooting into the surface of every pot and become an invasive weed. For the home grower, though, these plants can be tremendous fun: if you don't want lots of new plants, place them somewhere plantlets can't be accidentally knocked off: to propagate a few, just gently remove and place on to gritty compost where they will root readily. ❐

Jane Perrone is a garden writer

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